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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

JULY 1905.*

Wild Wheat.

BY M. E. FRANCIS (MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL),

AUTHOR OF 'FIANDER'S WIDOW,' 'THE MANOR FARM,'
'LYCHGATE HALL,' ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FAREWELLS.

ON Monday morning a message came to Peter from Bailiff Woods, announcing simultaneously that Mr. Ullington had telegraphed to engage him, and that Miss Manvers desired to see him immediately. He received the one intimation with no very great elation, and instantly, albeit reluctantly, prepared to obey the other.

He found Miss Manvers in her morning-room, sitting, evidently ill at ease, in a high-backed armchair; her feet denuded, as usual, of shoes and stockings and resting on a roll of oilcloth, which Nathalie, crouching beside her, moved backwards and forwards beneath them.

'Morning, Hounsell,' remarked the old lady acidly, as he entered. 'You're a nice humbug. I've sent for you to tell you so. Go on, girl'—(to Nathalie, who had suspended operations at Peter's entrance, for which she was evidently unprepared)—'go on. What are you blushing for? It's not the first time Hounsell has seen me barefoot. I'm so lame for some reason or other,' she explained, 'that I can't take my morning exercise on the grass, so I've thought of this expedient. I used to walk up and down the room—the oilcloth is just as good as a flagged path when it's

spread out—but I can't keep on my legs at all now. I don't know why. I'm sure I've taken trouble enough to follow out the cure in every detail. Unroll the stuff a little bit, Nathalie. This piece is getting quite warm; let's have a fresh one.'

'I'm sorry you are so unwell,' said Peter.

'No, you're not,' corrected Miss Manvers, with increased acerbity. 'You don't care a button whether I'm well or ill, and you don't mind how much inconvenience you give me. You're just as selfish as the rest of men—all men are selfish. What do you mean by running off like that without notice?'

Peter would not look at Nathalie, and yet he felt that she was startled.

'I am forfeiting a week's wages instead of giving notice,' said Peter, 'and I am going to pay for the clothes you gave me. I don't think you've so very much to complain of, Miss Manvers.'

'Don't you, indeed?' cried she, turning on him abruptly, and thereby bringing on an acute twinge of her ailment. 'Good Lord, this neck of mine; it will drive me crazy! You should have let me put on that cream cheese compress as I wanted to, Nathalie. It's all nonsense about flannel. Much good your precious flannel has done me. Go and get me that compress at once. They have cream cheeses ready in the dairy.'

Nathalie withdrew, stumbling in her eagerness to be gone. As she passed Peter she cast an imploring glance at him, but he would not meet it. He stood facing her cousin, square and stern, his hands clasped behind his back.

'What are you doing it for, I say?' continued Miss Manvers. 'Why should you take another place when you professed yourself so anxious to get this one? I believe there is a love affair at the bottom of it.'

Nathalie had seemed in a hurry to depart, yet some slight movement at the further end of the room, where a screen shielded the open door, inclined Peter to suspect that she was still present, and he returned, with studied coldness:

'I don't know why you should say that. Many motives may actuate a man besides love.'

'Tis love that makes the world go round,' announced the old lady oracularly. 'Why shouldn't it turn a silly boy's head? Now listen to me. There are no girls on my premises fit for you to associate with, much less to marry. No good ever came of the mixing of breeds. I can speak with authority, for I made a special study of the subject. You mayn't be thoroughbred, but

you are what I call a good roadster. Well, who would want to pair an animal of that kind with a carthorse? See what I mean? Don't!

'As you say,' returned Peter vaguely, 'it would be folly to put a thoroughbred in harness.'

'I didn't say anything of the kind,' retorted she. 'Besides, as I told you, you ain't thoroughbred. But I don't see any reason in all this for your running away. I rather like you. I'll raise your wages.'

'You are very good, but that would make no difference,' returned he.

'I'll give you a house, then.'

'No, thank you,' said Peter.

'Well, I think you are a fool,' summed up Miss Manvers. 'I told you so before, and I am more certain than ever now.'

'I believe I am,' agreed Peter; 'at least I have been one, but I am growing wiser.'

At this point a rustle at the other side of the screen betrayed Nathalie's presence, and during the indignant outburst which ensued Peter made his escape. But he had not proceeded far down the long corridor which led to the hall when he heard hasty feet behind him.

'Peter,' cried Nathalie. 'Oh, Peter, stop! Where are you going—why are you going?'

'My movements concern no one but myself,' returned he, drawing back from her and speaking icily. 'I am sorry to have inconvenienced Miss Manvers, but it can't be helped.'

'Are we to part like this,' she cried, almost in a whisper, 'after all—all that has gone between us?'

He returned her pleading glance stonily, and she continued, with vehemence:

'You think me wicked, but you don't understand. It is not my fault that I cannot love you.'

'How many more times will you insult me?' cried Peter, with blazing eyes.

As she drew back, paling, he made a strong effort to control himself, and when he next spoke it was in a tone of assumed lightness:

'By the way, I have an act of restitution to perform. I must return your handkerchief.'

With apparent coolness he produced from his pocket a small folded paper, which he handed to her ceremoniously. It contained

the little, flimsy, foolish rag which had been so important a factor in the marring of his career.

Nathalie opened the packet, gazed at its contents for a moment, and then tendered it to him again. Her eyes were bright and soft with unshed tears.

'Keep it,' she said in a whisper; 'it belongs not to me—not to the wicked, sordid girl whom you despise—but to your Dream-Nathalie, who never existed. Keep it, in memory of what has been.'

She thrust it into his inert hand; and in a moment she was gone.

Peter looked after her, hesitated, and at last, frowning, as though ashamed of the weakness, restored the handkerchief to his pocket.

'The Dream-Nathalie!' he said aloud; and then, with a heavy sigh, turned to leave the house.

Mrs. Meadway took a most lively interest in his future prospects, and appeared more excited than grieved at his approaching departure. It was she who first drew his attention to sundry practical matters which he, in his ignorance of housekeeping, might have perhaps overlooked.

'Ye'd best buy some furniture before you do settle in,' she remarked that evening as they sat at supper.

'To be sure,' returned Peter, looking up vaguely; 'I suppose I had. Perhaps you'll buy it for me,' he added, as an afterthought.

Mrs. Meadway was delighted at the notion, and said so.

'I have got some money in the savings-bank,' continued Peter; 'I'll get it out at once. Ten pounds, I suppose, would do for the present—just to get a few necessities?'

Mrs. Meadway expressed her satisfaction at the prospect of laying out those ten pounds.

'If you'll take my advice, Mr. Hounsell,' she pursued, her eyes twinkling at the possibility of a jaunt, 'ye'll let me get them things at Bourne. They'll be twice so cheap in the long run; and when 'tis a case o' ready money and not the hire system, why not have the cheapest? There! The bargains what's to be had in some o' they big places in the Commercial Road is summat wonderful. The second-hand be really, I mid say, better than new, bein' seasoned, so to speak. Then they has their own vans, so they don't make no charge for delivery. I think ye'd find it a savin' of expense in the end to let me go to Bourne.'

'By all means,' assented Peter; then, glancing across the

table at Prue, who was very pale and silent, he added kindly : 'And take your daughter with you. I should like Prue to go, too.'

'Oh, no,' said the girl quickly ; 'it would only be throwing away money. I know nothing about furniture.'

'But I should like you to go,' he persisted. He would not have the child so downcast ; enough for his misfortunes to overshadow him. Leaning forward he smiled at her, and repeated, with gentle insistence : 'I particularly want you to have a hand in choosing my furniture.'

Prue jumped up, and ran away from the table without speaking.

'Hullo !' cried Meadway, setting down the cup which he had been in the act of lifting to his lips ; 'what's wrong with the maid ?'

'There ! don't ye take no notice,' said Mrs. Meadway, with a tactful wink. 'Young girls—they be that tetchy and that tilty there's no knowin' where to have 'em. But she'll go, Mr. Hounsell, she'll certainly go. Don't ye take on about her—'tis the way o' womenkind, more particular maids, to go a-carryin' on, foolish-like ; an' Prue, she bain't no exception. She be a bit upset just now—I'm sure I can't think what for, unless it be your traipsin' off in sich a hurry. She don't understand, bless ye. A innercent young maid like her do never look further nor the end of her own nose, so to speak. But she shall choose the furniture, Mr. Hounsell.'

'Don't make her go against her will,' said Peter indifferently. 'I only thought she might like the outing.'

'And so she will, ye mid be sure,' returned Mrs. Meadway, still very arch and mysterious. ''Tis most oncommon thoughtful of ye, Mr. Hounsell ; and Prue has really a very good notion o' layin' out money, and wonderful good taste. She'll know how to choose things to your likin', ye needn't have no fear about that. Don't ye be at all anxious, Mr. Hounsell. I know my own daughter—'twouldn't be in reason that I shouldn't. I can read her like print.'

'What be driving at ?' growled Meadway at this juncture, pausing, with a bit of cheese on the point of his knife, and eyeing his better half with some disfavour. 'I never did hear anyone wi' so much talk as you've always got, missus. What's all this to-do ?'

'No to-do at all, Meadway ; nothin' o' the kind. Mr. Hounsell and me understands each other. All I be wishful for he to know is as there bain't no cause to be anxious ; and when I do say so ye mid be sure as there bain't, for there's no one in this martial

world, Mr. Hounsell, as do have a more anxious mind nor what I do have, I truly believe. There, I did say to the Reverend once : "I truly believe, sir," says I, "as I be the anxious-mindedest person as ever was barn. The way I do worrit !" I says. And he did look back at I wi' that kind o' smile—ye know the kind o' smile the Rector do always seem to have, no matter what you do say to en—"Mrs. Meadway," he says, "you, what be so fond o' texts, you did ought to say to yourself, *A Pillar o' Cloud by day and a Pillar o' Fire by night.*" Dear, to be sure ! I do often think o' that ; the words do seem made for I. I don't know so much about a pillar o' cloud—though I do lay me down when I be feelin' muddly in the head—but I'm sure, Mr. Hounsell, I do know well enough what 'tis to have a pillar a-fire o' nights. The way I do go a-tossin' and a-turnin' when I've a-got anything on my mind, an' my face that burnin' hot ! There, Meadway do often say he'd as soon lay down wi' a hearthquake—don't ye, Meadway ?

An inarticulate growl was the keeper's only response, and with another shake of the head and a succession of winks, Mrs. Meadway pushed back her chair from the table and went in search of her daughter, much to Peter's satisfaction. Her familiarity repelled him, and the flood of talk to which he had scarce attended seemed to him as tedious as superfluous.

Prue duly went to Bournemouth, and discussed her purchases on returning with an interest and animation which pleased Peter. He listened—with that curious detached smile which she was learning to know—to her account of how she had discarded horse-hair for cretonne and moreen for dimity, and of the wonderful chest of drawers which they had picked up, and the beautiful little pots and pans.

'They are all so bright and new, and shining,' cried she ; 'as pretty as a picture ! 'Tis a pity to think they should ever be blacked by fire.'

'But they can be kept nice and clean, Prudentia, my dear,' put in Mrs. Meadway. 'Twill be the pride and pleasure of whoever has to look after them to see to that.'

And again she assumed that extremely knowing expression which invariably called up a frown on Peter's face.

At last the time for departure came. He had said good-bye to the keeper before the latter had set forth on his morning round, and Mrs. Meadway was standing by the gate talking to the carrier, who was to convey Peter and his effects to the station ; but Prue was nowhere to be seen. He went from room to room calling her

softly. He could not leave without saying good-bye to her. As in desperation he opened the wash-house door he felt at first a faint resistance, but after a little gentle pressure it yielded to his hand. There stood Prue, with face averted and shoulders heaving.

Peter softly closed the door and went up to her.

'So you are sorry to say good-bye, Prue?' he said. 'Well, I can't be angry with you for that. It is nice to feel that someone cares a little.'

He took her by the shoulders and turned her round gently; but the curls which had escaped from her ribbon hid her face.

'You must all come and see my new house some day,' he continued, 'and I shall come and see you.'

He put back her hair, and placing one hand under her chin endeavoured to raise her face; but she resisted. Nevertheless, he saw that her lips were quivering, and that her long lashes were wet.

'Well, I must go,' he said. 'Good-bye. It is really not for long, little Prue—not for long.'

One hand still rested on her shoulder, and now, tightening its pressure, he drew her to him and kissed her lightly, as one might kiss a child.

The form encircled by his arm was indeed slender and immature enough, but the eyes which she suddenly raised to his were not those of a child. Looking into their depths he was startled, shocked at what he read there—little Prue was a woman! One moment, confounded by his discovery, he held her thus; in the next he felt her tremble—not as Nathalie had trembled in his embrace—it was otherwise, far otherwise with Prue; and again her eyes drooped, and she slid away from him. As he still gazed at her questioningly she slipped past him, and escaped from the room and from the house.

He did not seek to bring her back, but made his way to the gate and the waiting Mrs. Meadway.

'Ye'll have said good-bye to Prue, I d' 'low,' she remarked; adding, as he climbed into the van without replying, 'It'll not be for long, I daresay.'

'I daresay not,' agreed Peter; and he drew back under the green 'shed' to avoid the meaning glance which he had suddenly acquired power to interpret.

CHAPTER XIX.

PRUE.

ONE Sunday morning, shortly after Peter's removal, Prue heard the swing of the little gate, followed by a tap at the door. On opening it she found herself face to face with Peter himself—Peter, looking worn and haggard, but even 'more the gentleman,' as she said to herself, than when he dwelt under their roof. This was probably due to the fact of his having for that occasion exchanged his keeper's clothes for a suit from his former stock.

'They are all out but me,' said Prue. 'They are all at church.'

'I knew they would be,' returned he. 'I chose this time on purpose—I came to see you.'

She opened the parlour door, but he stepped past her into the kitchen. His eyes fell at once on an unaccustomed object on the deal table. In an uncovered box lay the doll, neatly tucked away under a tiny white sheet. The face, with its closed eyes, was uncovered, and a few violets were arranged upon its breast.

'Why, what are you about here?' inquired he, struggling to repress a smile.

'I'm going to bury Nancy,' said Prue solemnly. 'Mother says I'm grown-up now; she has made me put up my hair—haven't you noticed? And I feel altogether too old to have a doll about, so I thought while they were all away I'd just get it over.'

She spoke very rapidly and confusedly, growing red and pale by turns. She had scarcely dared to raise her eyes to his face since his entrance. Peter was also nervous, but inclined to be silent. He glanced at Prue's hair as she drew attention to it. He had indeed noticed an indefinite change in her appearance, but hitherto had not identified it. Though her waving, dark locks no longer flowed free, the alteration, instead of ageing her, had the contrary effect: it was such a little, round neck that was now exposed to view, every curve was so soft; the tendrils of hair that clustered round the nape and about the small ears were almost babyish. Peter's grave, abstracted gaze rested on them without lightening, however; and when he spoke it was in a set, monotonous tone, as though repeating a lesson previously well conned.

'I have come to see you for a very particular purpose. Sit down and let me tell you about it.'

He seated himself on the settle as he spoke, and she dropped down beside him.

'You know all that has happened to me,' he went on, after a pause. 'I have no secrets from you. I can deal with you fairly and squarely, without the fear of being misunderstood.'

She nodded breathlessly, her lips becoming a little white, her eyes expectant, almost fearful.

'You said to me once, weeks ago,' he resumed, in the same measured tone, 'that no one would ever love you in a very romantic kind of way. You said that, among the people you knew, a man generally picked out some girl who chanced to be near at hand, or whom for some reason or other it happened to be convenient to court. Yet these marriages turn out all right for the most part.'

He spoke in the tone of one who repeated a familiar argument, and seemed to be trying to convince himself as much as his listener.

'Why do you say this to me?' asked Prue suddenly.

There was a fire in her eyes which he had never seen there before.

'Because,' he returned slowly, 'I am thinking of making such a marriage myself. The romantic side of me is all gone—withered up, destroyed; but all the same I must live on, and do my duty to God and to the world like any other man—any other working man. I can't live quite alone—I have found that out since I have been yonder. I can't manage in any way by myself; so I am going to take a mate to keep my house for me. And now I have come to you, Prue. You know just how much I can give. I don't feel that I am robbing you, since you say yourself you would get no more from anyone else.'

Prue's hands were clasped in her lap—clasped so tightly that the tips of her fingers showed white beneath their tan. She looked at Peter steadily.

'Of course,' she said—in a voice so toneless that it might have been an echo of his—'of course I would get no more from anyone else.'

Then all at once her voice broke, and her great eyes became soft.

'If you want me,' she faltered, 'if you want me, you know I must come.'

Her look became unconsciously appealing, and she continued brokenly:

'After all—after all you chose me—you came first to me.'

A word would have comforted her, but he could not say that word; he was too honest to endeavour to deceive her.

'I came to you,' he said slowly, 'because you know all about me, and because, though God knows I am not worth it, I think you love me.'

She started, pressing her hands to her bosom and turning away her face, but not before he had caught the look that flashed over it—a look of such passionate reproach that he drew back aghast. He had seen such a look once in the eyes of a deer which had been wounded to death. A sudden disgust of himself came upon him. Was not this, after all, a dastardly piece of business? She asked for bread and he was giving her a stone.

'Prue,' he cried impulsively, 'I don't know how I dared come to you with such a tale. I can't imagine what I was thinking of. I—oh, forget what I have said! You have a right, my dear, to the fondest love that ever a man could feel. Why should I destroy your chances? I am a selfish brute.'

She turned towards him again, smiling faintly and shaking her head.

'Don't say that,' she said; 'it's all true—every word you said. I—I—you know all about me, just the same as I know about you. I—I'd rather have you than anyone else in the world. I'll be your true wife; I'll keep your house so well as I can, and I—won't expect—'

Her voice broke into a sob.

Peter's hand closed over hers, and silence fell between them. He would have given worlds to be able to play the lover, but his heart felt as heavy as lead; the very consciousness of the sorry figure he was cutting increased his depression.

'I will be good to you,' he said at length. 'I will work hard for you; I will be a kind and faithful husband.'

'Oh, I know you will be all that,' returned she, with a little flickering smile. After a pause she went on: 'I'll be bringing you a little bit of money, you know. Father's been saving it for me ever since I was born.'

'Oh, Prue,' broke out Peter, with a groan, 'I don't want your bit of money, my dear; I couldn't take it. I just want you—you yourself.'

He felt her hand flutter in his, and saw her face light up.

'You really want me!' she cried; and then, meeting his sorrowful gaze, continued quickly: 'There, don't say any more.'

Let me just have that to remember—you did say it once—you said you wanted me.'

'And so I do,' he returned, with an attempt at lightness; 'I want you very much. You should see my house all at sixes and sevens—and then it is so lonely. I wonder if you will mind the loneliness, by the way. It stands all by itself in a corner of the downs, with the woods on one side and the downs rolling, rolling for miles on the other. There's not another house within reach—there is not even a road. Perhaps you had better see it before you decide.'

But Prue shook her head.

'Well, let us be married as soon as we can,' he resumed, in those even tones which had no hint of eagerness in them. 'There is no reason for waiting, is there? Shall I come over to-morrow or next day and take you off to the registry office? They would do the job in a moment there, and we could go home together without any fuss—just you and I.'

'Oh, no!' cried Prue, looking shocked and wounded. 'Oh, Mr. Hounsell, whatever we do, let us at least have God's blessing!'

'I beg your pardon,' he returned; 'it's quite natural you should object, and I myself—if anyone had told me a year ago that I should make such a suggestion I wouldn't have believed it. But I—there are reasons. My mother—but it doesn't really matter—nothing matters. We'll get the Rector to marry us, Prue; you shall have a wedding like any other girl. Heaven knows you are giving up enough. We must see about it at once, and you must make your wedding-gown and ask your friends. Of course, you want a proper wedding, with a cake, and everything! One doesn't get married every day.'

'You know I don't care a pin for all that,' said she. 'I—I only want to do what's right.'

She spoke humbly enough, those eloquent eyes of hers pleading for his forgiveness; yet, nevertheless, Peter felt that on this point she would stand firm, and he liked her the better for it.

He rose. Prue rose, too.

'Good-bye for the present,' said Peter.

'Good-bye,' she returned.

He put his arm about her and kissed her, awkwardly enough. She permitted the salute, but did not return it.

'Won't you kiss me back, Prue?' he asked, almost in a whisper. 'We are engaged now.'

'Yes, if you like,' said Prue, and touched his cheek with her

lips. 'Mr. Hounsell,' she went on, with a crimson face and speaking very fast, 'you needn't carry on like that, you know, just to oblige me. I don't look for it, really.'

'Oh, Prue,' he cried, and caught her in his arms, this time with real tenderness; 'oh, my poor little Prue!'

She yielded to his embrace for the fraction of a minute, and then gently pushed him away from her.

Peter took up his hat and went out without another word; and Prue, after listening till his steps were no longer audible, dropped on her knees beside the table and cried as if her heart would break.

CHAPTER XX.

SOLEMN VOWS.

WHEN Mrs. Meadway announced the engagement of her daughter Prue to Mr. Peter Hounsell, late of Hounsell's House, the news created quite a stir. The wedding, which followed hard upon its heels, was destined to be a great gathering. Meadway relations galore were duly invited, as was also Mrs. Meadway's sister Jane, who, but for that unfortunate rheumatic fever, might have occupied the post which she now filled herself; also her Aunt Sabina, and several cousins. All who were bidden agreed to come, some from curiosity, others actuated by a more kindly spirit. Peter had offered one faint protest on hearing that Mr. and Mrs. Barnes from the Blue Lion were included amongst the guests, but had been silenced by an indignant query from his future mother-in-law: Was he ashamed of Prudentia? she wanted to know.

Thenceforth his lips were sealed.

Nevertheless, he looked and felt strangely out of place in the midst of the motley crew assembled on the church steps which he had so often trodden with all Sabbath decorum beside his mother and Godfrey. He was escorting his mother-in-law now, and she wore a terra-cotta silk dress, and a bonnet adorned with what seemed to be a peony. In front of them walked Meadway and his daughter, the keeper in a brand new coat, the collar of which pushed up his hair at the back so that it bore an even stronger resemblance than usual to the thatch which it always recalled. Peter's consciousness that, mingling with the triumphant con-

course of new relations, were several village folk who had known him from his infancy, and till the last half-year looked up to him as their superior, did not tend to increase his equanimity; and when, on entering the church, he took up his position, beneath the Rector's eye, his face was crimson with humiliation. He could not meet that glance. His old friend—the master who had entertained such high hopes on his behalf—what must he think of him now?

But, indeed, Peter knew well enough what he thought of him. When the subject of 'calling home' the couple had first been broached by Keeper Meadway it not only evoked a storm of indignation, but a very severe letter to the prospective bridegroom. Yet the lines, incisive though they were, were penned more in sorrow than in anger; and Peter could almost have wept over his friend's bitter disappointment and his own inability to set himself right in his eyes.

The Rector, like everyone else, found in this extraordinary entanglement the motive of Peter's hitherto inexplicable conduct. Of course it was his passion for Prue which had first led him astray, and which had beguiled him from his home and caused him to forego his birthright. Mr. Bunning was indeed sorely puzzled. Prue was a good girl—he curtly imposed silence on all who would have insinuated the contrary; the girl was a good girl. How, then, had she obtained such a hold over a man of Peter's standing? How was it possible that he, whose tastes and aspirations were of a more refined and ambitious order than belonged even to his own sphere, should have thus consented to lower himself irrevocably?

Peter had not answered the Rector's letter, and now, as has been said, he could not at once bring himself to meet his glance. Yet when the ceremony actually began, and he heard Prue's first tremulous response, he pulled himself together. What was the sacrifice he was making for her in comparison to that which she was making for him? His voice grew firmer as he turned his gaze steadily upon her. She wore, by her mother's desire, a white dress and a wreath and veil. Prue's own taste, however, had asserted itself in the extreme simplicity both of fashion and material, and she looked more like a maiden robed for confirmation than a bride. She was pale, and her face looked very small, and when she extended that little, toil-worn, brown hand of hers it trembled like a leaf. As he touched it, Peter's self-possession entirely returned to him, and he made the rest of the responses with his eyes full on the Rector's face.

'You'll shake hands with me, sir?' he said, when they met afterwards in the vestry.

The Rector wrung his hand in silence, and then glanced at Prue.

'God bless you, child,' he said; and, turning once more to Peter: 'You have undertaken a heavy responsibility. Be good to her!'

Coming down the church, which was crowded not only with guests but with mere onlookers, Peter stumbled all at once, but recovering himself went onward with a more rapid step. Had Prue dared to raise her eyes, however, she would have noticed his sudden pallor. In the remotest corner of that dark little church he had noted a gleam of gold under a wide-brimmed black hat, the momentary upturning of a pair of blue—very blue—eyes.

When, after long and tedious merrymaking in the over-crowded cottage, Prue and he at last drove off in the gig which was to convey them home, they passed in the wintry dusk the figure of a solitary horseman. Peter whipped up the pony, and the rider simultaneously touched his mount with his heel. Nevertheless, as they flashed past each other each recognised his brother.

'That was Mr. Godfrey, wasn't it?' asked Prue, in a low voice.

'Yes,' said the new-made husband very sadly.

'I wish,' said Prue, 'I wish he had given you joy.'

Peter made no answer.

'There were so many of them yonder drinking our healths and wishing us happiness,' she went on; 'but not one as belonged to you.'

'You see,' said Peter, after a silence, 'I'm nothing to any of them now. I have done with them, and they have done with me. I am another man, and this is a new life. I don't want ever to be reminded of the other. *You* belong to me now, Prue, and that's enough.'

They drove all the way to their new home; it was more than fifteen miles away, and the night was very cold. Peter did not speak much, but he was very tender to Prue, wrapping her up and taking every precaution for her comfort.

By-and-by the moon rose, and the sky became bright with stars; the leafless hedges and the grass-bordered roadside were a-glitter, too, with hoar-frost. As they drew nearer their destination, and forsook the beaten track for a rough path across the downs, they entered upon a fairy world, all silvery white beneath its vast, spangled canopy. Here and there a small copse or a

tract of gorse broke the monotony of the rolling expanse, and at last a great dark wood rose up against the sky, with a little twinkling light to leeward of it.

'Yonder is our home, Prue,' said Peter, breaking a long silence.

She turned to him impulsively, clinging to his arm with both hands. He pressed the hand nearest to him against his side, and then she withdrew both; but instead of tucking them away as before beneath her wrappings, she suffered them to lie loosely clasped on the rug which covered their knees. Peter saw her wedding-ring gleam in the moonlight, and said to himself dully that this was his wife, and that he was bringing her home.

How often had he pictured the home-coming of his bride, and with what a wildly throbbing heart! But the fancied home was never a cottage on the downs, and the hand on which he placed his pledge was snow-white and very soft, not brown and roughened with work.

He stamped on the footboard and bit his lip, touching up the cob at the same time so sharply that the tired animal stumbled.

'We've come a long way,' said Prue pleadingly; 'don't be hard on the poor beast.'

'I am in haste to be home,' returned Peter; and he lashed the pony again, as though by forcing it to mend its pace he could fly from the tormenting, tantalising thoughts that were pursuing him.

At last he pulled up before the little enclosure which marked off their home from the wild tract of down. The door was thrown open as they halted, and the woman who had been in charge for the day came hurrying out to meet them.

'You be terr'ble late, bain't ye, Mr. Hounsell?' she cried. 'There, I were gettin' quite anxious. Well, an' here's the new Mrs. Hounsell. How d'ye do, my dear? I hope you'll find yourself pretty comfortable. I've got everything ready—fire's burnin' nicely an' kettle's boilin', an' all. But I think I must wish ye good-night. It be so late, d'ye see; the children 'ull be callin' out for I. My husband, there! he be no more good wi' children nor I'd be wi' harses! Good-night, Mr. Hounsell; good-night, my dear. I wish 'ee the best o' good luck. But I've nigh upon two mile to go, an' I don't think I can bide no longer.'

'It's all right, Mrs. Whittle,' said Peter. 'Will you go into the house, Prue, while I take the pony round to the shed and make him comfortable for the night?'

It was a borrowed pony, and Peter was no doubt right in attending to its needs at once; but Prue felt a little forlorn as she

crossed the threshold of her new home by herself. Mrs. Whittle had been guilty of some exaggeration in stating she had made everything comfortable. The little place was indeed clean enough, and the fire was burning brightly, but she had not attempted to arrange the heterogeneous assemblage of Peter's possessions, which lay for the most part just as they had been dumped down by the carrier. Prue's housewifely instincts immediately asserted themselves, and she was hard at work introducing some measure of order into this chaos when her husband entered.

She smiled half-apologetically as she turned towards him, for he looked so grave that she began to wonder if she had done well to take so much upon herself at this early stage of possession.

The smile, the wistfulness of the little tired face, the willingness with which she had at once set to work, smote Peter. She had come in whole-hearted devotion to minister to him, to serve him to the very utmost limits of her powers; she had given herself absolutely to him; she was utterly dependent on him; her whole life was his to do what he would with.

A great wave of remorseful tenderness swept over him, and striding quickly across the room he took her in his arms.

'Listen, Prue,' he said—in a voice that vibrated with strong feeling—'here on our own hearth let me swear again the vow I made this morning. I will cherish you only; I will cleave to you only till death us do part—in thought and in deed.'

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COTTAGE ON THE DOWNS.

WHEN Peter entered the kitchen on the following morning, after his early round, he found the table laid and the kettle singing cheerily on the hob; but Prue was absent. He knew, however, she could not be far off, and, going in search of her, found her standing a few paces away from the gate of their own small premises, lost in so deep an abstraction that she was not aware of his approach till he touched her on the shoulder.

'Oh!' she cried, with a start of surprise, 'you're back already? I didn't think you'd be so quick. But I won't keep you waiting a minute—everything is really quite ready; the kettle is boiling and the bacon is keeping hot.'

Peter smiled. 'There's no hurry,' he returned, marking her eager haste to deprecate his possible displeasure. 'I'm not an ogre, Prue. I shouldn't eat you up if you did keep me waiting a minute. I believe you are afraid of me.'

Prue coloured up, but did not deny the imputation; and Peter, anxious to set her at her ease, slipped his hand through her arm.

'Let us have a look round together,' he said. 'I'm afraid you must think the place very, very lonely.'

'I never mind being alone,' she returned, brightening, in evident relief at the change of subject. 'When I was a little maid I used to fancy I'd run right away and live all by myself in the wood. I thought I'd like to be a wild woman, and live on nuts and berries, and sleep in a little house all made of bushes. I had found one all ready—a lot of bushes growing close together. You had to creep in on hands and knees, but when you got right inside you could nearly stand up straight in it; and I thought I'd live there, with the birds and beasts for company. You know I love the wild things.'

'So do I,' agreed her husband.

'This is a lovely place,' she went on. 'I like the wood—there! 'tis friendly and homely-like to have a wood so near; and oh, I do like the down! 'Tis so wild and so free, and one can see such a long, long way.'

Peter smiled again, well pleased, and the two surveyed the prospect in silence.

The laggard wintry sun had not long risen, and the sky was still aglow; the hoar-frost glittered in the early rays even more bravely than on the night before; the very air sparkled; every needle of the fir-trees had a diamond drop to add to this frost pageantry. At this hour the world seemed all freshness, all innocence—a fit and harmonious background for the little creature who clung to Peter's arm.

He looked down at her with a softening face.

'You must not be afraid of me, Prue,' he said. 'Heaven knows I am in every way unworthy of you; but at least you shall never have any cause to complain of harshness.'

'Oh, I am not afraid of that,' returned she quickly. 'I don't think I'm really afraid at all. I am only—oh, Peter, I am *that* anxious to please you!'

She looked earnestly into his face for a moment, and then, possessed by a sudden shyness, slipped away her arm, and ran into the house, leaving him to follow with a very thoughtful look.

Prue soon evinced an unusual talent for organisation. When her husband returned at dinner-time he was astonished at the transformation which she had already effected. Mrs. Whittle's makeshift cleanliness did not satisfy the new-made bride. Everything in her little kingdom was scrubbed and polished afresh; confusion was replaced by order; and, above all, she had, by some magic of her own, made of the place a home. And there she stood awaiting him, a matronly apron going right round her slim waist, her face flushed, but her eyes softly shining.

'Prue, you are a witch!' cried Peter, as he deposited his gun in the corner; 'better than a witch—a fairy—a Brownie! You have heard of the Brownies, haven't you? The kind household fairies that come and do all the work while the folk of the house are asleep. They sweep, and dust, and spin, and they skim the cream and make the butter—they are wonderful little people altogether. You must belong to them, I think, for you have done wonders here while nobody was looking.'

Prue smiled and dimpled.

'I like to be your Brownie,' she cried; and then, stretching out her tanned hands, she added, with a laugh, 'And the name just fits me, doesn't it?—such a gipsy as I am.'

'Not a gipsy,' corrected her husband; 'gipsies are wanderers. You are my little hearth fairy.'

He sat down at the table, while Prue, as proud and happy as the proverbial queen, set his dinner before him. Peter expressed immense astonishment at her culinary prowess; indeed, he admired and praised everything, from the apple turnover, at the making of which she had tried her hand for the first time, to the very potatoes, which he declared were boiled with consummate skill. The little woman grew ever happier and rosier; but all at once, at some extravagant phrase of commendation, her face fell.

'I'm afraid you're only saying it to please me,' she exclaimed.

'Well, if I was?' said Peter. 'Don't you know that the Brownie must always be rewarded with a saucer of cream? I haven't got any cream handy, you see.'

'And so you are making kind words do instead,' resumed Prue, as he paused.

She remained thoughtful, nevertheless, and Peter resolved not to overdo the humouring tactics. After all, she was no child, and was quick to detect any tendency on his part to treat her as such.

'I was thinking,' she observed, after a short silence, 'there's that great box of books. If you are going to settle down here, it

seems a pity not to unpack them. I've left all that side of the wall free, do you see? I thought the case itself would make nice shelves. If you would put them up I could stain and varnish them. Your books would go there nicely.'

'A capital notion,' cried he. 'We'll begin this evening, Prue.'

She could not have hit upon a happier expedient for diverting his thoughts. He dreaded idleness. His new employer had already remarked upon an energy that was indeed almost feverish. Hitherto he had tramped all day, and for many hours during the night, returning home so tired that he was glad to fling himself, with the least possible delay, upon his bed. But now that he was a married man he must alter in some measure this mode of life; and, if truth be told, he had somewhat dreaded the hour or two of inaction which he must in mere courtesy spend by the hearth.

He hailed Prue's idea, therefore, with enthusiasm, and for a few evenings the sound of carpentering disturbed the stillness of that lonely spot. Prue flitted in and out meanwhile, busy with many household tasks, pausing every now and then to exchange a word or two with her husband.

'If you'll take off your boots,' she said to him once, 'I'll clean them. I'm going to do mine now.'

'Prue,' cried he, sitting back upon his heels and speaking almost angrily, 'how dare you propose such a thing? You shall never clean my boots, or do anything degrading for me!'

Prue laughed softly.

'What a notion!' she cried. 'I don't mind doing such things. I've often blacked father's boots.'

'Well, you sha'n't black mine!' returned he. 'And look here. I saw you coming in this morning from the well, bent nearly double with the weight of the bucket. I'll fill it in future—remember that. I forbid you to do it.'

She did not answer, and, depositing the saw which he had again taken hold of, he looked up at her. Prue was smiling down at him, with her head a little on one side. She was pleased—there could be no doubt about that—but also tolerant, gently tolerant of himself and his odd ways.

'I'm to be a fine lady it seems,' she remarked, with a little laugh, as she went away.

The shelves were finished all too soon, and the pictures nailed up, and the curtains hung. The whole establishment was so tiny, and its owners so energetic, that in a very short time nothing more remained to be done. Peter had delved the little garden in readi-

ness for the spring, and at last the evening came when he was forced to sit opposite to his wife with folded hands.

'Tis quite pleasant to rest a bit,' remarked Prue.

'Very pleasant,' agreed Peter; but his eyes wandered restlessly round the room.

'There's all those books, you know,' cried Prue quickly. 'You'll be glad to read them again, I fancy.'

He glanced at her almost gratefully, and took down one from the shelf behind him. How quick she was to divine his moods!

'I think I'll do a bit o' mending,' she continued briskly; and disappeared, returning with a pile of his socks.

She sat down in her old place, and Peter turned the pages of his book; but he did not read.

The wind roared without, the trees creaking; every now and then there came a patter of raindrops upon the narrow-paned windows. On such a night the comfort of the fireside is most appreciated; and here sat Peter, lord of his own hearth, with his wife opposite to him. His wife! Many a time had he dreamed of an hour like this, when he should sit by his fireside face to face with the woman who was his. All the elements of happiness were there—the cosy, firelit room, her chair so close that he could have touched it with his hand, the slight figure busily working for him—yet he looked on as though at a scene in which he had no share. Presently he felt Prue's eyes upon him, and read in them a doubt, a fear. Alas! how could he reassure her? Was not he himself shaken with doubts and fears?

By-and-by, laying aside her work, she crossed over to his side.

'I should like to read a little, too,' she said. 'I am very ignorant, I know; but I think I could learn. Then I might be able to talk of the things that you like.'

He got up in silence and found her a book; and, after a moment's hesitation, she returned to her seat.

Oh, to be able to shake off the horrible oppression which seemed to be fastening on him anew, to gather Prue in his arms and to tell her that he did not want her to be over-wise! But he felt, as it were, paralysed. To-night he could not 'play up.'

(To be continued.)

The Lovely Miss Long.

A BOOK of very melancholy interest might be written on the sorrows of heiresses, and if such a work ever comes to be penned, the story of Catherine Tylney Long, of Wanstead House, will occupy a very prominent place in it. She was the greatest heiress of her time, with no disadvantages of mind, person, or descent; she had the world at her feet—even royalty aspired to her hand; yet she lived to see her great fortune dissipated, to find herself neglected and ill-treated, and to die untimely and miserably. Her great possession was Wanstead and the estates attached to it. Some centuries of historic associations clung round the old Wanstead House—associations which carry one back to Queen Elizabeth's golden days; while the history of the Manor loses itself in hoary Saxon tradition. The mansion inherited by Miss Long was not the 'Naked Hall Hawe' built by Lord Rich in Edward VI.'s short reign, but a magnificent Palladian palace, built by Earl Tylney in 1715. This earl was the son and heir of Sir Josiah Child, elder brother of Sir Francis Child, who gave his name to Child's Bank. Colin Campbell was the architect of Wanstead House; it was perhaps his best work, about equally praised and condemned by the critics, and whatever may be the value of these diverse opinions, it was generally regarded by English and foreign visitors as one of the most splendid places in England, rivalling the glories of Canons. It had a frontage of 260 feet, the interior was lavishly decorated by Kent and the Chevalier Casali in the 'sprawling' style satirised by Pope, and it was enriched with costly furniture, including Queen Elizabeth's cherished ebony chairs and sofa, and with rich tapestry and antique sculpture. After building and furnishing this magnificent house, the earl spent most of his time in Italy, leaving Wanstead to the servants and the casual visitors attracted by its fame.

Eventually, in 1784, as there was no direct line, this splendid estate passed to a nephew already rich, Sir James Long (who then

added the name of Tylney to his own), a baronet and representative of the old Wiltshire family, long settled at Draycot in that county. Sir James lived ten years only to enjoy his princely possession, and his son, a minor, dying shortly after, it became the inheritance of Miss Catherine Tylney Long, sister of the last-named. She was also under age, and during her minority Wanstead House was let to the Prince de Condé, and it became the frequent asylum of the exiled Bourbons. Thus, when the day came that her fortune was at her own disposal, Miss Long was the possessor of great estates in Essex and Wiltshire, the houses thereon, an accumulation of 300,000*l.*, and an income variously estimated as from 60,000*l.* to 80,000*l.* per annum.

Such a prize in the matrimonial market, great wealth united to a young lady of personal attractions and mental accomplishments, all to be bestowed upon one lucky competitor, could not fail to attract a legion of postulants. It would be uninteresting to attempt any catalogue of these aspirants, but it will be necessary to name some of them in the course of this paper. Various references to the struggle for the possession of this prize are to be found in contemporary memoirs. A vivid little etching in a letter by Lady Harriet Leveson-Gower (afterwards Countess Granville) to her sister, Lady Georgina Morpeth, brings the name of Miss Long in 1810 well before our eyes. 'My drive [in Hyde Park] was pleasant because Lady Harrowby is always so, and it was droll to see Miss Long's admirers riding about her carriage as the guards do about the King's. Lady Catherine [widow of Sir James, and mother of the heiress] bolstered up in one corner, and all the minor constellations backwards, each of whom is to have a hundred thousand.' The 'minor constellations' were the sisters of the heiress, who would have to content themselves with an insignificant hundred thousand pounds with which to buy a husband and to start life. Again she writes in the same year: 'I left Miss Long refusing to the right and the left.' She goes on to retail a sad witticism of old Sheridan, who said that 'he sat by Lady Catherine at supper, and that she munched and munched platesful of salad, till he took her for an old sow, and caught himself just going to say to the servants, "Pray change this lady's trough."' Time and manners have greatly altered since then, and it is to be hoped there are nowadays no wits with great reputations behind them willing to utter such vulgar personalities at the expense of an elderly lady with a fondness for salad, and no witty ladies of the *haut ton* willing to repeat them without any expression of disapproval. Harriet, Countess Granville

whose letters are quoted above, was the youngest daughter of the fifth Duke of Devonshire and of Georgina the beautiful duchess ; at the date of writing she was the happy twelve-months' bride of Lord Granville Leveson-Gower, second son of the first Marquis of Stafford. Her husband was created Viscount Granville in 1815, and Earl Granville in 1833, and was well known for many years as English ambassador at Paris under various Ministries. Lady Granville was a *bel esprit*, and, without being *femme politique*, was nevertheless a sympathetic partner, ably seconding, by her tact and social qualities, a distinguished English diplomatist. Her polished wit and exquisite sense of humour make her letters (edited by her son, and published in 1894) most delightful reading, a picture of English high society at home and abroad, during thirty-five years, scintillating with charm and interest.

There is perhaps a tinge of envy in the way Lady Granville writes of Miss Long ; and this feeling comes out much more strongly in other writers ; thus, in Lady Charlotte Bury's *Memoirs of the Time of George the Fourth*, we read, 'I wish to Hymen that she [Miss Long] were fairly married, for all this pother gives one a disgusting picture of human nature. Avarice in children is shocking, yet the united schools of Eton and Westminster are gaping after this girl as if she were fairer than a myriad of Venuses.' This occurs in a letter dated 1811 ; no indication is given of the writer. As Lady Charlotte Crawford, Lady Bury had been a lady-in-waiting to the unhappy Princess Caroline, and in these memoirs seems to be continually hesitating between frank indiscretion and timorous attempts at mystification ; but the references to Miss Long and her 'pack of truffle-hunters,' which will be quoted, are definite enough.

The most distinguished of Miss Long's admirers was the Duke of Clarence, afterwards King William IV. A ludicrous anecdote of his advances to the great heiress is related by Mr. G. Lewis—'Monk' Lewis, the novelist—in a gossiping letter to Lady Charlotte Campbell. The duke is said to have commissioned Mrs. F——n to offer Miss Long his hand and heart, or as much of the latter as was left after his long attachment to Mrs. Jordan. The lady proved a bungling ambassadress, and told the heiress that the duke was willing to part with Mrs. Jordan and give Miss Long her place. All the world knew that Mrs. Jordan was living with the duke at Bushey Park in all but matrimonial felicity, surrounded by an abundant crop of FitzClarences. Miss Long naturally assumed that she was wanted to fill a similar place, and, having no

ambition in that direction, first fell into a fit of weeping, then to bestowing unpleasant names on the awkward ambassador, and finally dismissed her without ceremony. Such was the story with which society regaled itself in November 1811. It was caught up by the *Scourge*, a vicious satirical journal which lashed without mercy the foibles of all and sundry who came within its purview. In the number for December 1811 there appeared a print by George Cruikshank entitled 'Princely Piety; or, the Worshipper at Wanstead.' Miss Long is seated on a rich dais of crimson and gold, approached by steps, at the foot of which is the Duke of Clarence thrusting aside another suitor. He is pursued by Mrs. Jordan pouring upon him the vials of her wrath in the shape of a shower of military and naval dwarfs—the FitzClarences, to wit—and crying, 'False, faithless Clarence, behold thy children! Hem! Shakespeare.'

Cruikshank's caricature introduces some of Miss Long's other devotees, among them Robert Coates—'The Mirror of Fashion,' as he loved to be called; 'Romeo' Coates, as he was generally styled; or 'Curricule' Coates, from the vehicle, shaped like a scallop-shell and gaudily coloured, that he is supposed to have introduced; or 'Diamond' Coates, from his coat buttons set with brilliants. 'Romeo' was a native of Antigua, the son of a West Indian merchant long settled in that then prosperous island. The father died in 1807, and the son determined to come to England to cut a dash on the fortune he had inherited. He succeeded. This quaint creature was an extraordinary compound of virtues and eccentricities; good-natured and charitable to the last degree, vain and conceited as a spoiled child; gentlemanly in feeling, childish and vulgar in display; valued and respected as a friend by such as Judge Talfourd and Lord Chancellor Campbell, the victim of an adventurer like the Baron de Geramb; cultured in tastes and habits, the butt of the multitude as a coxcomb and a fool; unsullied by the fashionable vices of the day, extravagant and reckless through the greater part of his career; yet he lived to reach a good old age, never tasted the discomforts of want, and ultimately found sympathetic biographers in J. N. and H. H. Robinson, who close their interesting volume with this valedictory estimate: 'We believe that "Diamond" and "Romeo" Coates will remain uneclipsed as the greatest dramatic amateur of the nineteenth century.' On this point, as the authors themselves say, *chacun à son gout*. His best-known sobriquet of 'Romeo' Coates was gained by his persistent efforts as an amateur in that difficult rôle, which has tested

the powers of so many eminent actors. 'Romeo's' efforts were not well received by his contemporaries; even though invariably given in the sacred cause of charity, supplemented by handsome donations from his purse, his performance was invariably accompanied by a running fire of cat-calls and yells. If self-consciousness is a sign of genius, 'Romeo' must have been one, for he never lost belief in himself, and repeated his performances with a perfectly sublime indifference as to what he knew was in store for him. This was the curious creature whom Cruikshank introduced as the rival of a royal duke in the siege of Wanstead. In the print he appears with a crowing cock on his head, in allusion to his crest and motto, 'While I live I'll crow,' with the trappings of Romeo at his side, and with sundry 'odes' in front, the last allusion to his mode of conducting his suit. He who was so courageous in facing hostile pits and galleries quailed before the joint charms of Venus and Mammon, and preferred his love gingerly in verse. Whether Miss Long was 'lovely' entirely in respect to her personal charms, or whether her personalty and realty had a major share therein, is not now easy to determine. One meets with no disparagement on this head, but the homage of graceful epithets is the prerogative of heiresses. It seems, however, that this highly favoured lady was well endowed in mind, body, and estate. Coates, at least, had no doubt, if the following lines, addressed by him to her, are to be taken in testimony :

Titian, could he but view thy heavenly face,
 In vivid colours he'd each beauty trace.
 Lucretia's charms were great, but thine surpass
 Nature's first model—o'er that Grecian lass.
 Enchanting fair one! save, oh quickly save
 Your dying lover from an early grave.
 Lady, ah! too bewitching lady! now beware
 Of artful men that fain would thee ensnare,
 Not for thy merit, but thy fortune's sake.
 Give me your hand—your cash let venals take.

The merit of these lines, such as it is, was claimed by Miss Euphemia B. Boswell, daughter of that Bozzy who dogged the heels of Dr. Johnson, and gave the world an immortal biograph. Its moving strains touched no sympathetic chord in the obdurate heart of fair and wealthy Miss Long. She consigned her Romeo to an early grave at the age of seventy-five, and, regardless of the warning in the prophetic finale, allowed a 'venal' to take her

hand and give her cash to others. The suitor whom the Duke of Clarence is pushing aside in the satirist print is the Baron Ferdinand de Geramb, a friend of the Prince Regent, who is said to have greatly admired the baron's whiskers; a friend also of 'Romeo,' and his brother in adversity as regards the favour of the heiress. In the caricature he is represented on his knees, surrounded by money-bags—a sly hit, doubtless, at the presumed object of his visit to England.

Coates's first appearance as an actor in London was at a charitable performance at the Haymarket Theatre on December 9, 1811, when he appeared as Lothario in Rowe's *Fair Penitent*. He had previously performed at Bath and Brighton. Among those in the boxes on December 9 was the baron, who, as a personage unpopular with the multitude, was greeted on his entry with every symptom of derision, and with a bow by Lothario. The baron had had a varied career on the Continent, and came to England ostensibly for the purpose of enlisting 24,000 Croats in the English army. He became a society lion for the time; one consequence of his visit was the adoption of the Hussar uniform still in use. However, his demands became extortionate, and this, combined with an accumulation of proofs that he was playing the part of a foreign spy, determined the Government to apply the Alien Act to him and ship him off to Hamburg. There a fit of versifying in favour of the exiled royal family of France brought about his arrest by Napoleon, who had no scruples about such trifles as violating neutral ground. At length the baron exchanged prison in the Château de Vincennes for the Trappist monastery of Reiningen, and died in 1848, procurator-general of that order. Thus passed another of Miss Long's admirers.

Sir Lumley Skeffington, of Bilston and Skeffington Hall, who also appears in Cruikshank's print, had the reputation of being the most polished gentleman of the day. He, too, was a friend of Coates, and, like him, an amateur actor; the two, however, did not come in conflict, for Skeffington affected Hamlet, not Romeo. Skeffington, too, had had some success as a playwright in his *Word of Honour* produced in 1802.

These, then, were the votaries of Miss Long known to the satirist in 1811. There were, of course, others whom the lady 'refused to the right and the left.' Among these was Frederick Foster, son of that Lady Betty Foster who became the second wife of the fifth Duke of Devonshire. This gentleman confided to Lady Granville that the heiress had 'secretly determined in his favour'—

that he was, in fact, *l'homme pieux qui s'est toujours tenu écarté de la foule*. But he was mistaken; the wish, doubtless, was father to the thought. Then, too, there was Frederick Lamb, afterwards Lord Beauvale, and brother of William Lamb, the future Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, and his successor in that title. Society had been busy with his name, for Melbourne House was supposed to have its united eyes upon Miss Long as a very eligible *partie* for him. The swain was recalcitrant, or despaired of success where so many had failed; moreover, he was flirting with Lady Abdy, and said he would not marry Miss Long if she had four times as much money, on which Lady Granville observed that it 'looked unpromising for the Melbourne House speculation.' Why he should have had any objection to marry Miss Long does not appear; although agreeable and clever, he simplified his views of society by thinking all men rogues and all women something unmentionable, and perhaps objected to the heiress only as one of a class. He did not marry until 1841. All the while that society was thus excited about this possibility and that, the lady's predilections rested on the then William Wellesley Pole. Now, this gentleman has sometimes been confused with the politician who was the Chief Secretary for Ireland. But the Chief Secretary had been married since 1784 to Catherine, daughter of Admiral Forbes, and it was his son on whom Miss Long's choice had fallen. The father was a politician of distinction, who gave a fair portion of his time to the service of the State. On the death of the Marquis of Wellesley he became Earl of Mornington, to which title the son succeeded. The son was never anything but a spendthrift, whose name became synonymous with reckless and ridiculous extravagance. He was heavily in debt when he wooed and won Miss Long. The young lady seems to have enjoyed her privileges while she could, and to have given the chosen one the trouble of putting himself on his best behaviour. In Lady Charlotte Bury's memoirs we read, 'Miss Long hath become quite cruel to Wellesley Pole, and divides her favour equally between Lords Killeen and Kilworth, two as simple Irishmen as ever gave breath to a bull.'

Wellesley Pole was already well known to his friends as a wasteful ne'er-do-weel. Thus we find Lord Byron writing to his friend the Rev. Dr. Harness on December 8, 1811, 'Pole is to marry Miss Long, and will be a very miserable dog for all that.' Byron was well qualified to judge, for his own father had played a very similar part to that which was about to be played by the bridegroom elect.

The marriage took place at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, on March 14, 1812. Some notices of the marriage at earlier dates in contemporary magazines were premature. Contemporary accounts agree in making the event a very important 'society function.' Modern journalism would have gloried in it; even the 'prentice hands of those earlier days have not failed to tell us of the bride's white satin skirt, covered with *real* Brussels point lace; of her cottage bonnet of the same materials, further adorned with two ostrich feathers, and of her satin pelisse trimmed with swans-down; nor do they omit to tell us that this sumptuous finery cost 1050 guineas; but this, we may assume, would be a mere trifle in these later and greater days when a lady of distinction has told us it is impossible to dress on two thousand a year. In addition to her thousand pounds' worth of costume, the bride wore jewels worth at least 30,000*l*. Compared with this, the bridegroom, in a plain blue coat with yellow buttons, buff breeches, and white silk stockings, was a very cheap article. He began, however, in the careless, shiftless style he intended to go on, for he had forgotten to provide a ring, and the ceremony had to be suspended while a jeweller was sent for. This done, we are pleased to learn, the ceremony went to its conclusion without any *further* incident.

The marriage settlement had set aside a provision for the mother, portions for the sisters, and a small annuity for the wife. Wellesley Pole assumed the name of Tylney Long. Mrs. Pole's troubles probably began very early, for the extravagance of her husband was on every tongue. He had a niche in the 'Rejected Addresses':

Bless every man possessed of aught to give!

Long may Long Tylney Wellesley Long Pole live!

Eventually his treatment of his wife was such that she separated from him, and her children were placed under the protection of the law. Ten years proved sufficient for Mr. Pole to exhaust his wife's more than princely fortune. Wanstead House was brought to the hammer; its sale was a nine-days' wonder. Twenty thousand copies of the catalogue were sold at five shillings each; the inventory of the lots filled 500 quarto pages, and their sale reached over 40,000*l*. This, however, was not enough to satisfy Mr. Pole's array of creditors. The house and estate had to go after the furniture and fittings. No purchaser could be found for so splendid a house, and there was nothing to be done but pull it down and sell the materials. Even this did not clear up the debtor's liabilities, so he fled to France to avoid arrest. Then his family connections

made interest for him, and the ruined spendthrift was appointed 'Gentleman usher and daily waiter to the King,' an office which carried with it the important privilege of freedom from liability to arrest.

Thus Mr. Wellesley Pole was enabled to return to his own country, and his name, which had been a by-word for profuse extravagance, became instead a synonym for impecuniosity. William Mackworth Praed has a scathing reference to him in a poem entitled 'Utopia,' contributed to the *New Monthly Magazine* in April 1827 :

There was no fault in the Penal Code,
No dunce in a public school,
No dust or dirt in a private road,
No shame in Wellesley Pole.

Six years later, when Poulett Thompson, in defending the Budget of 1832-33, asserted that the deficit was in the pockets of the people, there to fructify by use, and Peel retorted that this discovery of the 'fructifying principal' ought to make the right honourable gentleman the most popular man in the three kingdoms, Praed seized on the idea, and enlarged on the jubilation of various impecunious people, among them Wellesley Pole :

'Henceforth,' Long Wellesley Long Pole said,
'Henceforth I shall not hear with dread
The echoes of my knocker.'

But what of the injured wife, whose noble fortune, that a prince of the blood had aspired to, squandered recklessly, had been blown into thin air? She, who was born in affluence, accustomed to all that luxury could give her, courted on every hand, passed through life unspotted in a slanderous age; no tongue or pen was ever raised against her. One thing only was lacking to her—the affection of the husband she had so richly endowed. But this was denied her. Neglected by him, and reduced almost to penury, she gradually faded away, dying on September 12, 1825. Truly a very sad book might be written on the sorrows of heiresses.

It might have been supposed that, after so terrible an object-lesson, the Hon. Wellesley Pole would have been looked at very much askance by the fair sex. But women, apparently, see things not as men see them; at all events, he found a lady willing to risk it. This was Helena, third daughter of Colonel Thomas Paterson, and widow of Edward Bligh. She was a lady of noble descent, which could be traced to James II. of Scotland and Edward I. of

England, and, what was doubtless of more importance in the eyes of the spendthrift, of some fortune. This marriage took place in 1828, and it did not take her husband very long to be ruined again. His luckless wife was driven to seek temporary relief in police courts, and to become an inmate of St. George's Workhouse.

A considerable portion of the park surrounding Wanstead House—184 acres, to wit—is now public property. It was purchased from Lord Cowley by the Corporation of London, and transferred by them to the Epping Forest Committee to be held in trust for the public. How many of those who wander through its thick woods, and linger round its lakes, watching the herons and moorhens, or gaze upon the costly grotto, ever give a thought to the sorrows of Catherine Long or the wicked recklessness of Wellesley Pole ?

LESLIE WINTER.

Takagi San.

TAKAGI stood in his cabin warming himself at the steam heater, for it was deadly cold on deck, the cold that the blockading squadron at Port Arthur had to endure day in and day out. He wished to be alone with his thoughts, and had he been on board one of our own British ships he would have had to freeze alone with them also, as at present there is no means of heating officers' cabins in our navy.

Takagi San was a young man, and looked younger than he really was, his face clean-shaven, not affecting the bristly moustache so frequently met with in his Imperial Japanese Majesty's navy; a round, close-cropped head surmounted his sturdy little figure dressed in blue serge tunic and trousers, the sleeves decorated with a lieutenant's stripes in black braid: gold lace is of no service for working in, and, as it costs money, is not worn by the ever-practical Japanese officer when work has to be done.

At the moment Takagi's face was far from showing its usual placid good humour. There were lines on the forehead and a narrowing of the eyes that showed deep and unhappy preoccupation. He was in trouble and in debt. An older man might have laughed at the former, and said he would grow out of it, and as for the latter it was nothing, amounting to some five or six hundred yen only. But to the young officer they were very, very real, both his troubles and his debts. Perhaps, if he killed himself, his friends would say, 'Poor chap! If he'd only gone to somebody they'd have lent him the money. Any of his friends would have done it for him.' But would they? You who have never wanted to ask a friend don't know what it means. One refusal will break the spirit of the petitioner, and fearing that refusal he may even prefer death. How easily people talk of getting a loan from friends who have never had occasion to ask one!

Towards the end of 1903, when all the Yellow Press of Japan was shouting for war, and when the Marquis Ito and other noble

statesmen were with difficulty restraining the better-class Tokio journals, Lieutenant Takagi, like so many other naval and military officers of Japan, was seized with the thirst for war. Inaction bred a fever in such high spirits, and the unrest born of what seemed an endless waiting had only been alleviated by indulgence in amusement and the search of variety. In this way many an officer overran his pay, and the general feeling of suppressed excitement led them in many cases into excess.

Takagi had been able to spend most of this period of waiting in Tokio, and there had met O Takke San, the Geisha. These two had soon conceived an undying passion for each other, a passion which had taxed Takagi's pocket to its utmost to gratify, and soon the savings of O Takke San had to be encroached upon. She was not yet eighteen, and had not finished her apprenticeship, and, although she had saved some three hundred yen, was far from being able to buy her freedom from her teacher and owner, one Yamatoya. It required all the persuasive powers of O Takke San to make her lover accept this sacrifice; but once they had started, this money, too, was spent, and still war had not been declared. Takagi then had approached a brother officer, Dr. Kuroda. The doctor, as far as the ordinary run of Japanese officers go, was wealthy; he also had designs on the beautiful O Takke San, and in this way the hateful compact had been made.

The doctor undertook to finance Takagi till he should rejoin his ship, but that if the money owed to him were unpaid within a year, then Takagi must resign all claim to O Takke San, and leave the doctor free to purchase her from her master Yamatoya; to this O Takke San agreed, being willing to forfeit everything in the future for a few more days of present bliss. Takagi had long promised to buy O Takke San, and he now further stipulated that, in the event of his death within the year, the insurance money—his life being already insured against all risks—should be paid to Kuroda, and that O Takke San should then be free to refuse the purchase of herself by the doctor should she wish to.

Thus a few more delirious weeks were spent by the lovers in Tokio, till Takagi was ordered to sea. The doctor also at the same time received orders to repair to a naval hospital, consequently his chances of dying by an act of war were reduced to the smallest probability.

The Japanese, being the politest of nations, possess no curses in their language. Takagi accordingly had to fall back on English with which to express his feelings at the present moment. In the

first burst of enthusiasm he had, in common with all the officers and men on board, given up one month's pay to the patriotic fund started for the widows and orphans of those slain, and now that very day he had received a pitiful little letter from O Takke San begging him to forward her what money he could spare, as illness had overtaken her; and her master, although for his own gain anxious enough that she should soon recover, was unwilling to purchase luxuries for a pupil who was bringing him in nothing in return for her board and lodging. So Takagi had occasion to freely exercise his knowledge of English against himself, his extravagance, foolishness, and lack of forethought. Angrily he drew on his sea-boots preparatory to relieving the deck, when the bugles rang out the strident command 'Exercise action.' Throwing on his fur-lined overcoat and cap, the young lieutenant rushed on deck to find activity everywhere. Guns were being cast loose, ammunition brought on deck, stretchers for the wounded were being placed in convenient situations, tampions removed from the guns, gun-sights placed in position, hoses uncoiled and run along the decks, breech-blocks opened and shut with vicious clangs, and everywhere sailors hurrying to their stations. A cruiser in the offing had signalled that the Russian fleet were making a sortie, and the Japanese battle squadron was already under way to intercept them. Hardly had Takagi reached the deck when the captain sent for him and told him that the commanding officer of *Roku ju hachi ban* (No. 68 torpedo-boat) was suffering from frost-bite, that he was to take charge of her, and to act on his own initiative; that they would be up with the torpedo flotilla in another twenty minutes, and that he must be ready to take over his command as soon as they reached the flotilla.

Takagi returned to his cabin and hastily completed his arrangements, not forgetting to pen a short affectionate note to the dear one in Tokio. His chance of distinguishing himself had at last arrived; but somehow the knowledge did not elate him. He knew he should be wildly happy; but instead a dull, aching stupor seemed to have seized him—the sickening anxiety of the previous hour could not be at once shaken off at the knowledge of the good fortune which now had been thrust upon him.

A tap on the bulkhead, and a sailor reports that the boat has been called away to take him to his torpedo-boat, and on reaching the deck he saw that the action had already commenced at long range, the enemy being engaged by the Japanese fleet, which was approaching them at an angle.

Once aboard his tiny command all personal matters seemed to vanish ; great Japan was then his only idea, and he and every man aboard would prove themselves true sons of a fighting nation.

All of us know the sensation of walking against a biting east wind, but add to this a temperature some score of degrees lower than what we ever experience in England, multiply the force of the wind by the speed of a torpedo-boat when she is ' opened up ' and the flame flies from her funnels, blind you, and lash your face with driving spray that cuts like a razor, and freezes as it touches the deck, put you on a heaving platform that makes movement impossible, let the biggest guns you have ever seen be fired all round you, and you will then have a faint idea of what many a man in Admiral Togo's squadron has experienced.

As Takagi dashes forward in No. 68, through the awful cold and lashing spray, he sees the Russian fleet turn and seek the shelter of their harbour. The effective use of a torpedo at their then range was impossible, but he hoped to dash in towards the last ship of their line, and fire a torpedo at her before she could gain the entrance. Every rivet and bolt in the little boat strains and works, the deck heaves up and down like a floor carpet that the wind has got under, her sides throb and pant like a living thing, fire and cinders fly from her funnels, and the bitterly cold spray dashed from her bows strikes with such pain on the faces of the deck hands that they almost scream with the agony. Nearer and nearer the little black thing draws to the huge Russian ship in spite of the projectiles from the quick-firers that make the water boil round her and throw up columns of white spray that fall in a fine mist in the sea or to freeze on her pulsing decks. The tube is trained on the beam, and Takagi is just about to put his helm over and launch his torpedo as he comes broadside on to the Russian, when some frightful upheaval shakes his enemy from truck to keel, the huge ship lurches and heels over, men are seen to leap from her decks into the sea, clouds of steam arise, and almost before the Japanese can realise what has happened, the great ship has sunk. She has struck a mine and is lost to the Tsar, not by any act of his enemy, but by chance, fate, providence, call it what you will. Takagi signalled to stop the engines, and for a short time the sailors gazed awestruck at the sudden slaughter of so many brother seamen ; then he rang down again for half-speed ahead, and the little black boat proceeded nearer towards the forts in the hope of rescuing some who may still survive the awful disaster and the shock of the ice-cold water. It seemed that their quest would be vain, to

remain long in the vicinity of the disaster would draw the fire of the shore batteries ; but when about to turn to rejoin their squadron, they saw a man's head about six hundred yards away. Owing to the moderate sea, it was impossible to go alongside the man with safety ; they could see that he was almost spent, and Takagi, throwing off his coat, jumped into the icy water with a life-buoy attached to him. In a few minutes he was up to the Russian and able to pass the buoy over his shoulders and under his arms, and so the two were dragged on board. The Russian was by that time unconscious, and as it meant death to remain on deck in their dripping clothes, the two were quickly taken below, stripped and rolled in blankets ; and as shots from the shore began to sing round the little craft, she turned her black stern to the enemy and proceeded full speed back to her friends.

On board his ship Takagi was put in his bunk, and the Russian, still hovering between life and death, was placed in the captain's quarters and carefully tended. Later the captain visited Takagi and complimented him on his action. Was there anything he could do ? Takagi's troubles had returned to him in full force by this time, after the day's excitement. A few hundred yen only would relieve him ; but no, he answers the captain that there is nothing he wants. Later the Russian recovers consciousness and desires to see his rescuer.

The two met in the after-cabin. The Russian, still weak, but already recovering some of his *debonair* good spirits, spoke in good Japanese :

‘ I have to thank you for my life.’

Takagi gravely replies, ‘ You are my prisoner, sir.’

‘ Yes,’ says the Russian, ‘ but I am also your debtor. See, here are two thousand roubles ; these would have gone to the bottom with me. Take them, I beg of you—they are yours.’

For a moment Takagi hesitates. Two thousand roubles ! All his troubles would be at an end if he but had that sum. The hesitation is but transitory, and firmly he replies :

‘ Dai Nippon does not wage war to gain money, neither do her sons. I cannot take it.’

The Russian laughs to conceal his discomfiture at the refusal. The money was nothing to him, and he had meant its offer kindly. He was truly grateful to Takagi, for life was pleasant to him, and it was a relief to both when the somewhat uncomfortable interview ended by Takagi's retiring.

The night brought no rest to him : he tossed from side to side

in his narrow bunk, always thinking of his debt, of his love, and the intolerable compact he had made with Kuroda.

The doctor in the morning found the young lieutenant in a high state of fever, and in his opinion slightly delirious, and he reported to the captain that Takagi was likely to develop pneumonia as a result of the immersion of the previous day. As far as Takagi was concerned his brain remained clear, and after many hours of weary thought he decided that his only course was to commit suicide, thereby paying Kuroda and freeing O Takke San. Towards evening he pretended to sleep, and finding himself unwatched, he slipped from his cabin on deck, and so overboard.

A weeping mousmee brought the news to O Takke San as she lay in her room on a mat covered with a thick 'futon.' A telegram had been received in Tokio saying that Lieutenant Takagi in delirium of pneumonia, contracted after immersion, the result of a gallant rescue of a Russian officer, had jumped overboard and been drowned.

The poor little girl received the news calmly.

'Why do you cry?' she said. 'Of course he was brave. Think, it would be O so long before he could join me had he remained with the fleet, and now he has gone over, and I may join him in a few days.'

The next day they brought O Takke San his last letter.

'See!' she cried, 'he can still write to me.' And then she read his last miserable, heart-broken letter in which he had almost foretold what his death would be. A look of triumph spread over her pale face.

'My lord has only gone over to await me. He died to save me from Kuroda. I know it. It was no delirium he suffered from. I shall meet him almost at once. O my love, my king! See, I can sleep the next few hours O so sweetly, and when I wake he will clasp me in his arms.'

So O Takke San slept, clasping his last dear letter to her bosom. What mattered it that her poor little room was denuded of all its luxuries and ornaments! She was going in a few short hours to her lover, and those hours were spent in child-like sleep.

Even the placid Daibutsu himself must have smiled when he saw the rapturous meeting of those two lovers among the immortals.

H. L. NORRIS.

The Spoils of Office.

WHY does every Government cling so tenaciously to the responsibility and drudgery of office? Wherefore the feverish eagerness of every Opposition to take the burdens of the Empire upon its shoulders? Does the phrase 'the Spoils of Office' explain the mystery of the immense difficulty there always is in turning the 'ins' out, and the little persuasion which is necessary to induce the 'outs' to go in? Surely here is a matter of the highest public interest, which is well worth investigation.

The present salaries of the Ministers of the Crown were fixed in 1831, on the recommendation of a Committee of the House of Commons, appointed by the Whig Administration under Earl Grey, better known as the Reform Ministry, on their accession to office in 1830. The official emoluments again underwent examination in 1850 by another Parliamentary Committee, which reported in favour, practically, of the retention of the 1831 settlement. On this Committee of fifteen members, presided over by Lord John Russell, were rigid economists like Sir William Molesworth, Cobden, Bright, and Ricardo. 'For these offices,' they report, 'it is requisite to secure the services of men who combine the highest talents with the greatest experience in public affairs; and considering the rank and importance of the offices, and the labour and responsibility incurred by those who hold them, your Committee are of opinion that the salaries of these offices were settled in 1831 at the lowest amount which is consistent with the requirements of the public service.'

There are sixty-two political offices, and the salaries amount altogether to 158,581*l.* per annum. It does not seem an extravagant sum, considering the number of Ministers among whom it is divided, their undoubted ability on the whole, the exacting nature and immense responsibility of their labours, their devotion to duty, and the vastness and wealth of the Empire whose affairs they administer. Moreover, apart from the Law Officers of the Crown,

the utmost salary to which a statesman can attain is 5000*l.* a year. It is by no means an insignificant salary. But of the sixty-two offices in the administration it is attached only to seven, and the emoluments of the other posts range downwards to 334*l.* per annum.

The Prime Minister receives no salary, his position being unknown to and unrecognised by statute law. Some office of State with nominal duties, and carrying a salary—usually that of First Lord of the Treasury—is accordingly held by the Premier. The First Lord of the Treasury, or, as he is fully described, 'First Commissioner for executing the office of the Lord High Treasurer of his Majesty's Exchequer,' has associated with him the Chancellor of the Exchequer and three Junior Lords of the Treasury in the control of the nation's purse. The post is now a sinecure in the departmental sense, no duties being attached to it, but it carries a salary of 5000*l.* per annum and an official residence, 10 Downing Street. These have been the emoluments of the office since 1780. It must not, however, be supposed that the Prime Minister has no work to do. As head of the Government his duties are most responsible, laborious, and varied, for they mean the general supervision of every department of the State, and of all important political affairs, domestic, colonial, and foreign.

Of the Prime Ministers who have sat in the House of Commons, some have been not only First Lord of the Treasury but Chancellor of the Exchequer. Pitt was Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as First Lord of the Treasury in his long term of office from 1783 to 1801. Henry Addington, who succeeded Pitt as Premier, was also Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury. Pitt, on returning to power in 1804, again filled the two offices; and the precedent was followed by Perceval and Canning when each was Prime Minister. Sir Robert Peel, in his first brief three-months' administration of 1834-35 was also First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Gladstone both in his first administration, 1868-74, and in his second, 1880-85, was for a time Chancellor of the Exchequer as well as First Lord of the Treasury. The Prime Ministers, from Pitt to Canning, who were Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury, drew the salaries of both offices, then amounting to 10,398*l.*; but on the recommendation of the Committee of 1831, it was decided that in the event of both positions being again held by one Minister, there should be a saving of half the salary of the second office. Peel and Gladstone, accordingly, were paid only at the rate of 7500*l.* a year—the

full salary of each office being fixed at 5000*l.* in 1831—for the time that each was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Salisbury made a new departure by acting as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs as well as Prime Minister in his three administrations, his salary being the 5000*l.* which he drew as Foreign Minister. The labours of these Premiers, who, in addition to supervising everything, administered a special department, and particularly a department so onerous as that of the Treasury or the Foreign Office, must indeed have been immense. It is improbable, now that the labours and responsibilities of office are increasing every year, that the herculean task will ever be undertaken again. But it is evident that our Prime Ministers have never shirked work while enjoying the emoluments of office.

The effective chief of the department which controls the collection and expenditure of the national revenue is not the First Lord of the Treasury, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is a hard-worked Minister, and not often are his duties in the imposition and remission of taxation brightened by the sunshine of popular favour. 'You have held for a long time the most unpopular office of the State,' Gladstone wrote to his fallen Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robert Lowe, who had come to grief over an attempt to impose a tax upon matches in 1873. Gladstone was an authority on the subject, for he had himself filled for years the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. 'No man can do his duty in that office, and be popular *while* he holds it,' he went on, in the same letter of sympathy to his colleague. 'I could easily name the two worst Chancellors of the Exchequer of the last forty years; against neither of them did I ever hear a word while they were in (I might almost add, nor for them after they were out): "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you." You have fought for the public, tooth and nail. You have been under a storm of unpopularity; but not a fiercer one than I had to stand in 1860, when hardly anyone dared to say a word for me; but, certainly, it was one of my best years of service, even though bad be the best.' The salary attached to this arduous office before 1831 was 5398*l.*, which was made up of fees from different sources. On the recommendation of the Committee of 1831 it was reduced to a fixed sum of 5000*l.* The Chancellor of the Exchequer has also an official residence, 11 Downing Street.

There is also the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, who assists the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the administration of his department. He is paid 2000*l.* a year. It is a curious instance of the

survival of forms in the Constitution long after they have ceased to have any practical application that the Junior Lords of the Treasury, to whom I have already referred, are still supposed to exercise some control over the department. The formula invariably employed in the official letters of the Treasury runs: 'I am directed to acquaint you that My Lords do not see their way to sanction the expenditure——.' Yet the three Junior Lords of the Treasury have, as such, no official business whatever. An interesting account of their installation in office, and of what happens afterwards, has been given by one who was himself Junior Lord of the Treasury. On their appointment they assemble in a room at the Treasury and take their places at a table. A solemn official appears and says, 'Will your Lordships allow your secretary to enter?' They bow, and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury comes in. 'Will your Lordships allow your secretary to take a seat at the table?' the official then asks. Again they bow, and the Financial Secretary sits down. They then disappear, and the department sees them no more.

What, then, do the Junior Lords of the Treasury do for their salary of 1000*l.* a year each? Their duties, according to an amusing definition once given by Canning, are, always to be at St. Stephen's, to keep a House, and to cheer the Ministers. They are, in fact, the assistant Whips of the party in office. The Chief Whip also fills a sinecure post which used to be styled the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury, and has of late years been called the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, which carries a salary of 2000*l.* per annum. The constitution knows not the Whip, any more than the Prime Minister, and, like the Prime Minister, the Whip is provided for by an office to which there is a salary but no duty attached.

For a century before 1782 there were two joint Secretaries of State. One had the management of affairs relating to the northern States of Europe; the other dealt with matters affecting the southern countries of the Continent, and Home affairs, which included Ireland and the Colonies. In 1782 there was a redistribution of their duties, and each got a distinctive title. The former was called 'Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs,' and was given control of the relation of the Kingdom with all foreign States; and the latter was styled 'Secretary of State for the Home Department,' which included Great Britain, Ireland (which then had her own Parliament), and the Colonies. There was also at this time a Minister called 'Secretary at War,' who was a subordinate of the

Home Office, and responsible for the land forces of the Crown. In 1794 the Secretary of State for War was created; and in 1801 the affairs of the Colonies were transferred to him from the Home Department. But in 1854, on the outbreak of the Crimean War, the War Minister was relieved of all Colonial business, which was vested in a new Secretary of State for the Colonies. In 1858, after the Indian Mutiny, when the authority and power of the East India Company were transferred to the Imperial Government, the Secretary of State for India was first appointed. The salary of each of the five Secretaries of State is 5000*l.* per annum. Each is assisted in the work of his department by an Under-Secretary of State, who is paid 1500*l.*; and in the case of the War Office there is an additional Parliamentary official known as the Financial Secretary, who also receives 1500*l.* a year.

The First Lord of the Admiralty is paid 4500*l.* He, like the Secretary of State for War, has two subordinate officials in Parliament—the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, who gets 2000*l.* a year, and the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, who gets 1000*l.* a year.

One of the busiest Ministers in the administration is the President of the Board of Trade. The work of the department is very diversified. It covers all matters affecting trade and commerce, railways, trams, canals, harbours, lighthouses, the mercantile marine, and gas and water works. The salary of the President is 2000*l.* In 1904 a Committee appointed by the Treasury to inquire into the position and duties of the Board of Trade recommended that the department should be reorganised, and placed on a more business-like and efficient footing under a 'Minister of Commerce and Industry,' to be paid 5000*l.* a year, the salary of a Secretary of State. A Bill to carry out the recommendations of the Committee is included in the Government's programme of business for the present Session. There is also a Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, who is paid 1200*l.* a year, which it is proposed to raise to 1500*l.*, the salary of an Under-Secretary of State. Another busy Minister is the President of the Local Government Board, a department created in 1871. He controls local authorities and has charge of the public health. His salary is 2000*l.* per annum, and his Parliamentary Secretary gets 1200*l.*

The Board of Agriculture was established in 1889. In 1903 the powers of the Board of Trade relating to fisheries were transferred to this department, and its title was changed to that of 'The Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.' It has a President, who is paid 2000*l.* a year, but has no Parliamentary Secretary. The

President of the Board of Education has a salary of 2000*l.*, and is assisted in the work of controlling our great system of national education by a Parliamentary Secretary, who gets 1200*l.* The First Commissioner of Works, head of the Office of Works, which performs overseeing duties in connection with royal palaces, State buildings and royal parks, has 2000*l.* per annum. The Postmaster-General receives 500*l.* a year more, or 2500*l.*, in consideration of his more onerous duties and responsibilities in the control of the postal and telegraph services.

The Chief Secretary for Ireland is paid 4425*l.* The salary was formerly 5500*l.* The Committee on Official Salaries, in 1850, recommended its reduction to 3000*l.*; but it was fixed at 4000*l.* with an extra allowance of 425*l.* for the special expenses of the post. The Chief Secretary has also an official residence in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. He is paid double the salary of an Under-Secretary of State—besides his extra allowance—because he is exposed to large additional expense by being obliged to reside partly in London and partly in Dublin. Formerly the Chief Secretary was subordinate to the Home Office, but he has been for many years independent of all control by that department. His full title is 'Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.' The relations between the Lord-Lieutenant and his Chief Secretary have, however, become inverted in recent times. The Chief Secretary is now solely responsible to Parliament for the administration of Irish affairs; and the Viceroyalty has become more and more a position of dignity rather than of political power. The most highly paid office in the administration is that of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the salary being 20,000*l.* a year, with an allowance of 2769*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* for outfit on appointment, and an official residence in the Phoenix Park, known as the Viceregal Lodge, as well as apartments in Dublin Castle. There is also a political office of Vice-President of the Irish Department of Agriculture, created in 1899, to which a salary of 1200*l.* a year is attached.

A more hard-worked Minister than the Chief Secretary for Ireland is not in the administration. Mr. George Wyndham, speaking in the House of Commons on February 20, 1905, said, 'Owing to the exacting demands that Ireland makes upon the time and attention of a Minister, I had not enjoyed a holiday for six years.' The corresponding office for Scotland is of far less responsibility. The salary of the Secretary for Scotland is 2,000*l.* a year.

The Lord Chancellor, as head of the Chancery Division of the High Courts of Justice, is the highest judicial official in the land.

As Speaker of the House of Lords, he presides over that assembly when it sits either as a branch of the Legislature or as the Supreme Court of Appeal. The salary attached to the office is 10,000*l.*—4000*l.* as Speaker of the House of Lords and 6000*l.* as Judge. There is also a Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who gets 8000*l.* a year. Indeed, the best-paid posts in the Government are the legal. The Attorney-General has a salary of 7000*l.*, and the Solicitor-General 6000*l.*; and both receive, in addition, high fees for cases they conduct on behalf of the Crown in the law courts. According to a Parliamentary return published in 1895, the highest sum paid in salaries and fees to the Attorney-General in any year between 1880 and 1895 was in 1893-94, when the total reached 20,285*l.*, this being made up as follows: Salary, 7000*l.*; fees, 12,635*l.*; clerks, 650*l.* The Attorney-General that year was Sir Charles Russell, and his exceptionally high fees were due to his appearance in the Behring Sea Arbitration. The lowest point reached during the fifteen years was in 1889-90, when the total was 9179*l.* The highest remuneration received by the Solicitor-General between 1880 and 1895 was in 1888-89, when 6000*l.* was paid in salary and 5056*l.* in fees—total, 11,056*l.*; and the lowest was in 1891-92, when the emoluments fell to 7168*l.* In 1903 the salary and fees of the Attorney-General amounted to 19,921 7*s.* 9*d.*, and the salary and fees of the Solicitor-General to 13,068*l.* 19*s.* 3*d.* In 1904 the emoluments were—Attorney-General, 12,993*l.*; Solicitor-General, 9748*l.* They are the confidential advisers of the Government on legal questions. Both also expound and defend legal sections of Government Bills in Committee of the House of Commons. The Lord Advocate of Scotland is paid 5000*l.* and fees, and the Solicitor-General for Scotland 2000*l.* and fees. In the case of Ireland, the Attorney-General gets 5000*l.* and fees, which amounted in 1904 to 7000*l.*; and the Solicitor-General 2000*l.* and fees, which in the same year reached 4000*l.*

There are three sinecure posts in the administration. The first in dignity is the Lord President of the Council. He presides at the meetings of the Privy Council; but practically the only occasion on which all its members assemble is at the demise of the Crown, when it becomes the duty of that ancient body to meet for the purpose of proclaiming the new sovereign. Formerly the Lord President was the chairman of certain committees of the Privy Council, which were long ago abolished. In 1837, when Lord John Russell took the first step to establish a system of national education, a Committee of the Privy Council

was appointed to administer the moneys which Parliament voted for the purpose, and over its deliberations the Lord President presided. In 1855 a new office was created—that of Vice-President of the Council—which in time became vested with all the administrative duties in connection with education, and that, too, disappeared when the Board of Education was created in 1899. In like manner the duties of the Privy Council in regard to trade have long since been transferred to the Board of Trade, and its duties in regard to public health have gone to the Local Government Board. Again, the Lord President controlled the exercise of the statutory powers of the Privy Council in connection with the prevention of cattle-disease; but the recent creation of a Board of Agriculture took that work out of his hands and left him without any business. The office carries a salary of 2000*l.*

The office of Lord Privy Seal is a survival from the historic past when the Privy Council sought to restrain the acts of the Crown by insisting that the Lord Chancellor should not affix the imprimatur of the Great Seal to any grant, or patent, or writ which the Sovereign desired to issue, without their authorisation in the form of a warrant under the Privy Seal. In these happy days of Parliamentary government, the Lord Privy Seal has no departmental duties, but he gets a salary of 2000*l.* a year. The office is generally bestowed upon an aged and experienced peer whose counsel is desired at the deliberations of the Cabinet.

Another office of dignity rather than of responsibility is that of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. His duties—in connection with the control of the revenues of the Duchy, which are vested in the Sovereign and his heirs—are purely nominal, so that he is free to come to the assistance of any member of the administration when hard pressed in Parliament or by departmental work. He is paid 2000*l.* per annum for his services.

In addition to the ministerial offices, there are a number of posts in the Royal Household, which, like those in the administration, are vacated at a change of Government. The Master of the Horse is paid 2500*l.* per annum. There was also the Master of the Buckhounds, with a salary of 1500*l.*; but on the recommendation of a Parliamentary Committee the Royal hunt was discontinued, and the post was not filled by the present Government. The Lord Steward and the Lord Chamberlain are each paid 2000*l.*; the Vice-Chamberlain, 900*l.*; the Comptroller of the Household and the Treasurer of the Household 904*l.* each. There are also seven Lords-in-Waiting, each of whom has 702*l.* per annum; a Parlia-

mentary Groom-in-Waiting at 334*l.*; a Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard, and a Captain of the Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms, each at 1200*l.*; and a Mistress of the Robes, who is generally a duchess, at 500*l.* The duties attached to these offices are of a ceremonial character, and are exceedingly light. But the appointments enable the Government to secure, principally in the House of Lords, the services of men competent to assist them in different capacities both in and out of Parliament. Finally, there is one unpaid Minister in the administration, and that is, strange to say, the Paymaster-General. He is the head of the office which makes the payments required by the different departments of State out of the sums voted for the purpose by the House of Commons, and placed to his account by the Treasury. He issues the warrants for the salaries of his colleagues in the Ministry, and gets nothing himself. What a tantalising position! But it is not salary, it is position, which is the attraction; and the Paymaster-General, though unpaid, is a member of the administration.

A Minister may look forward to a pension on retiring from office after a certain number of years' service. An ex-Lord Chancellor of England receives 5000*l.* a year, but in consideration of the pension continues to act as a Law Lord. An ex-Lord Chancellor of Ireland gets 3692*l.* 6*s.* 1*d.*, the penny, no doubt, like the more substantial remainder of the pension, being duly paid quarterly in farthings. These pensions are payable as a matter of course, however brief may have been the periods of service. In the corrupt stage of political life, when probity often sat loose upon public men, there were numerous fat pensions and sinecure offices for Ministers who were needy or simply greedy; but as political morality developed with the progress of the nineteenth century, or as the taxpayer grew impatient of his increasing burdens, this egregious system of growing rich or repairing broken fortunes at the public expense gradually came to an end. In 1869, the granting of pensions to ex-Ministers was relieved of even the suspicion of venality by the passing of the Political Offices Pensions Act. Three classes of pensions for ex-Ministers were created—namely, a first-class pension of 2000*l.* a year, for four years' service in an office of not less than 5000*l.* a year; a second-class pension of 1200*l.*, for five years' service in an office of less than 5000*l.* and not less than 2000*l.* a year; and a third-class pension of 800*l.* for five years' service in an office of less than 2000*l.* and more than 1000*l.* a year. The period of service may be continuous, or at different times, and in different offices of the

same class. 'No new pension shall be granted in any class while four pensions in that class are subsisting,' says the Act, 'nor shall more than one pension under the Act be granted in the same year.' An applicant for one of these pensions must make a declaration that it is necessary to maintain the dignity of his position as an ex-Minister of the Crown, and should he have an accession of fortune the pension is to be relinquished. It is also provided that should the pensioner be again appointed to office with salary, he is not entitled to draw the pension while he is in office. Only fourteen ex-Ministers have been obliged to take advantage of the Act during the thirty-six years in which it has been in operation. It is interesting to note that Gladstone, in his last term of office, had come to hold strongly the view that these political pensions should be abolished. 'He was only deterred from trying to carry out his views,' writes Mr. John Morley in his *Life of Gladstone*, 'by the reminder from younger Ministers, not themselves applicants, nor ever likely to be, that it would hardly be a gracious thing to cut off benefactions at a time when the bestowal of them was passing away from him, though he had used them freely while that bestowal was within his reach.'

I do not think it can be said that the salaries attached to political offices are more than fair remuneration, considering the important duties and weighty responsibilities of these positions. Two curiously opposite tendencies may be observed to-day in the conduct of the affairs of the nation. It is an economical age. There is quite a rage for seeing that the public service is discharged at the smallest possible expense consistent with efficiency. At the same time there is an ever-growing demand for the widening of the sphere of the State's activity, which, of course, makes bigger and bigger the bill presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer year after year to the nation for payment. The latter tendency has led, among other things, to the interference by members of the House of Commons—the legitimate and very proper interference—in the most minute details of departmental administration. There has been, accordingly, an immense increase in the duties and responsibilities of every Minister of State. Lord Rosebery, speaking at the opening of the Colman Institute for Working Men, at Redhill, Surrey, in November 1904, claimed for every Minister of the Crown the title of 'a working man.' It is a claim easy to substantiate. Think of all that falls to a Minister to do. He has to assist in framing the political policy of the Government, and to defend it in Parliament and in the country at public

meetings. He has, further, to frame the particular measures of his office, and to submit them to Parliament. He has to discharge the heavy administrative duties of his office. He has to spend long hours in Parliament, at the call of the division-bell, which is a serious hindrance to progress in his work. Said Lord Rosebery in extremely interesting passages :

‘The burden in the time of Mr. Pitt was a very heavy one, but it was as the burden of a little finger in reality compared with the weight that rests upon Ministers now. At comparatively rare periods messengers arrived from the Continent to Mr. Pitt and his Government laden with despatches containing all the news that was then to be given, very often very old, sometimes, I suspect, worthless because it was so old ; but, at any rate, it was a fixed and periodical arrival, which might be anticipated and could be measured. But now, with the invention of the telegraph, the Minister has no limit or bounds to his responsibilities or his activities. He lives at one end of a wire which is firmly fixed in his entrails, so to speak, the other end of which is fixed at any centre of electrical disturbance which may happen in the universe, and is constantly giving the Minister shocks of the most serious kind. Never for a moment—that is my point—is he free from the strain and stress of nerves, brain, and body which make his occupation almost a superhuman one.’

Still, official salaries stand to-day exactly as they were fixed in 1831. Gladstone had a passion for economy. He even grudged expenditure on the garden of his official residence as First Lord of the Treasury in Downing Street, so eager was his desire to save the national exchequer. But he always considered that he earned his salary as a Minister of State. John Bright, on the other hand, had a curious compunctious visiting of shame when the quarterly cheque for his official salary arrived. ‘There I don’t a bit agree with you, Bright,’ said Gladstone, to whom he once disclosed his feelings. ‘I had rather take my official money than anything I receive from land, for I know I have earned every penny of it.’

It must be remembered, in considering the rewards of public service, that it is no easy matter to attain to office as a Minister of the Crown. The posts are few, the aspirants are many, the competition is keen. Apart from the three peers of the Blood Royal, and the twenty-six spiritual peers, who are ineligible for office, there are at present 574 members of the House of Lords, and 670 members of the House of Commons, or a total of 1244, who are qualified, at least as members of Parliament, to fill the sixty-two

offices in the administration, with the exception of Mistress of the Robes in the Royal Household.

Some favourites of fortune attain to office while yet they are young. But most members of Parliament never reach it, even after long and brilliant careers in public life. It is a curious circumstance that Fox, who was forty years in Parliament—having entered the House of Commons when he was nineteen, and retained his seat until his death at the age of fifty-nine—held Cabinet office for only about eighteen months. In 1782 he was Secretary of State for three months in the Rockingham Administration; in 1783 he filled the same office for nine months during his coalition with Lord North, joint Secretary of State, with the Duke of Portland, as Premier, nominally rather than effectually at the head of affairs. Then followed twenty-three years of Opposition during the long and brilliant ascendancy of William Pitt. In January 1806 Pitt died, and in the Grenville Government which followed Fox returned to office for the third time as Secretary of State. Once more his tenure of the office was brief. After eight months it was brought to an end by his premature death in September 1806.

Fox was a rake, and, being a younger son, naturally he was always in debt. But he never mourned for the spoils of office so that he could the more freely indulge in his tastes as a man of pleasure. He desired office that he might embody his political ideas in Acts of Parliament. He moved his famous resolution for the abolition of the slave trade in June 1806. His health had broken down, and, conscious that the end was near at hand, he declared that after forty years of public life he should retire, feeling that he had done his duty, if he carried his motion. The motion was carried by a majority of 99—114 voting for it, and only 15 against. It was practically his last appearance in the House, as a few days later disease compelled him to retire.

On the other hand, William Pitt, as a Minister, was the spoiled darling of fortune. In 1782, at the age of twenty-three, he was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Shelburne Administration. He was out of office for the nine months in 1783 during which Fox and North were in power. But in December of that year, on the dismissal of the Coalition Government, he became First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Prime Minister, and he was not yet twenty-five. He held these offices for the unbroken term of seventeen years. As First Lord of the Treasury he had 5000*l.* a year, and 5398*l.* a year as Chancellor

of the Exchequer. He had, besides, the official residence in Downing Street. The Clerkship of the Pells, a sinecure office worth 3000*l.* a year, fell vacant on Pitt's accession to power; and in that age of jobs it was deemed a remarkable instance of disinterestedness that, instead of taking the place himself, and thus acquiring an independence for life, he should give it to a friend. But on the death of Lord North in 1792, George III. appointed him to the sinecure office of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports with a salary of 4000*l.*—reduced by payments to subordinates to 3080*l.*—and the seaside residence of Walmer Castle. For eight years, therefore, he had 10,398*l.* per annum, and for another nine years, 13,478*l.* per annum, from the State. Yet on his resignation in 1801—owing to the refusal of the King to sanction the emancipation of the Catholics, without which Pitt regarded the Union with Ireland which he had just carried as incomplete—he was in debt to the amount of 45,000*l.* As his official salaries were stopped—though, of course, he retained the 4000*l.* a year as Lord Warden—he was in danger of being thrown into prison as a debtor. The merchants of London offered him a free gift of 100,000*l.*, and the King tendered him 30,000*l.* from his Privy Purse, so that he might extricate himself from his unpleasant predicament. He declined both offers. He, however, accepted from fourteen personal friends and political supporters 11,700*l.* as a loan, by which he was enabled to discharge the most pressing of his creditors. In May 1804 he returned to power as First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Prime Minister, and again drew the double salaries of 10,398*l.* until he died, in office, on January 23, 1806. His debts were paid by Parliament. They amounted to the enormous sum of 40,000*l.*, exclusive of the 11,700*l.* advanced to him in 1801 by his friends, who now declined repayment.

What was the explanation of Pitt's indebtedness? His private life seems to have been remarkably pure. His one dissipation was an extra bottle of port. He was a bachelor. A man of cold and shy manners, he had few friends—his nose, as Romney said, was turned up to all mankind—he mixed little in society, and he was not given to hospitality. Yet with 13,478*l.* a year, and town and seaside houses 'free of coal, candles, and taxes'—to quote the official phrase of the time—in each of which he maintained but a plain and inexpensive establishment, he died at the early age of forty-seven, owing 51,700*l.* The only explanation of the mystery that has been advanced is that, so absorbed was Pitt in public life, and so indifferent was he to money, he neglected

his private affairs and was robbed by his servants. It was an hereditary weakness, perhaps. His father, the first Earl of Chatham, of whose private life Lord Chesterfield wrote, 'It was stained by no vices, nor sullied by any meanness,' died in debt to the extent of 20,000*l.*, which Parliament paid, as well as settling an annuity of 4000*l.* a year on his successors in the earldom.

'Dispensing for near twenty years the favours of the Crown,' says Canning in the epitaph he wrote of William Pitt, 'he lived without ostentation and he died poor.' Further than this it is now impossible to carry the story of the material result to himself of Pitt's official career. But these happy words are of general application as a tribute to the devotion, honesty, and self-sacrifice of the Ministers of the Crown. There is no instance of a Prime Minister who grew rich in office. Spencer Perceval, who was assassinated in the Lobby of the House of Commons on May 11, 1812, left his family so ill-provided for that Parliament had to come to their assistance. As is usual in such cases, Parliament acted handsomely. It made a grant of 50,000*l.* to the family, and voted to the widow a pension of 2000*l.* a year, which on her death was to be continued to the eldest son and increased to 3000*l.* Lord John Russell, when he was Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, declared that no man could fill any of the high offices of the State unless he had a private fortune. 'For my part,' said he, 'I never had a debt in my life till I was First Lord of the Treasury.' It is necessary for a Minister largely to increase his expenditure in order to meet the calls and claims of his position. He must live in a better style in office than in opposition. A large house, servants, and carriages are essential to the fulfilling his social obligations. 'If I recollect aright,' said Lord John Russell to the Committee on Official Salaries in 1850, 'when Monsieur de Tercy went from France to endeavour to make peace with the Dutch Government, he was very much struck, on calling upon the Grand Pensionary, to find the door opened by a servant-maid, and he thought it showed very great republican simplicity; and no doubt it was very becoming. But I think that if Lord Palmerston had only a housemaid to open the door, and foreign Ministers called there, everybody would say that he was very mean and unfit for his situation.' Palmerston at the time was Foreign Secretary, and was noted for his lavish hospitality. When Gladstone was appointed Prime Minister in 1868 he removed to Carlton House Terrace. In 1875, after his defeat at the polls, he wrote to his wife that they must retrench their expenditure.

'The truth is,' he says, 'that innocently and from special causes we have, on the whole, been housed better than according to our circumstances. All along Carlton House Terrace, I think, you would not find anyone with less than 20,000*l.* a year, and most of them with much more.' His official salary was but 5000*l.*; and when it was stopped he retired to Harley Street. On again attaining to the Premiership, he migrated from the brown bed to the blue, and, in the exalted region of Carlton House Terrace once more, spent considerably over his salary as First Lord of the Treasury.

The emoluments of office were an important consideration to some of the greatest men in political history. Chatham, Burke, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Perceval, and Canning had no hereditary fortunes, and if there were not adequate salaries attached to office, they could never have placed their great abilities at the service of the country. Edmund Burke, whose efforts to effect economic reform in the administration of the affairs of the Kingdom led to the abolition of many political sinecures, insisted, nevertheless, that reasonable compensation should be paid to Ministers. Said he :

'I will even go so far as to affirm that if men were willing to serve in such situations without salary, they ought not to be permitted to do it. Ordinary service must be secured by the motives to ordinary integrity. I do not hesitate to say that the State which lays its foundation in rare and heroic virtues will be sure to have its superstructure in the basest profligacy and corruption. An honourable and fair profit is the best security against avarice and rapacity, as in all things else a lawful and regulated enjoyment is the best security against debauchery and excess.'

Moreover, if the salaries of office were meagre, statesmanship would become a mere appendage of wealth. In former times most of the offices of the State fell to members of the territorial aristocracy with ample private means as well as great traditions of public service. To these men, with personal fortunes of 15,000*l.* or 20,000*l.* a year, the emoluments of office may have meant an unconsidered trifle. But the old practice of confining the offices of State to men of hereditary position and wealth no longer obtains. The tendency to open the arena of statesmanship to all, without distinction of birth or rank or fortune, is bound to obtain greater force as time progresses, and in order to attract to the service of the State the men best equipped for it in intellectual ability, business capacity, and practical experience in affairs, the salaries attached to office must at least be adequate.

..But the fact remains that the remuneration is not, and never

can be, the attraction of the public service. Those are few who make politics a profession. Men do not embark on a political career with the object of attaining office as a means of livelihood, in the way in which men choose to become clergymen, lawyers, or doctors. The uncertainty of attaining to office, and, in the event of reaching the goal, the inevitable shortness of its tenure, will always make statesmanship a precarious calling. Members of Parliament are, as a rule, engaged in commercial and professional occupations, and they follow politics as a concurrent career. A few who show a special aptitude for official life ultimately reach the Treasury Bench, but they hold on, nevertheless, to the established and secure positions on which they have hitherto depended for their bread-and-butter. Some aspire to office because of the prominence of a Minister of the Crown in the public eye. Others are animated by the instinct of domination. They desire power and influence for the pleasure of the mere exercise of authority. To a few, no doubt, the quarterly cheque is the attraction. But the main motive is, surely, an aspiration of service, not of aggrandisement—an ambition to rule the State for its good, according to certain well-established political opinions.

‘This won’t do. You have taken the Queen’s shilling.’ So said Disraeli to a member of his administration who was absent without due cause from a division in the House of Commons. It is not often that a Minister has to be reprimanded by his chief for laxity in the discharge of his responsibilities and duties either to his party or to the State. The administrators of the affairs of the nation have always been noted for the most scrupulous devotion to the public interest. Happy country! It has men of the highest class of ability and integrity ever ready to take its burdens upon their shoulders. So rare has been the purely selfish statesman in its history that the public confidence in the honesty or disinterestedness of its Ministers is unshakeable. It does not, of course, follow that the excellent men who become Ministers are always the best of politicians. Personal integrity and intellectual ability are, of course, some assurance of wisdom in the guidance of the State. But they are not an infallible guarantee. If they were, there would never be a need for a change of government. It has happened, now and then, that the principles of an administration were large and lofty enough to bring the nation to ruin. But this much is true—that if Ministers cling to office in times of party stress and difficulty, it is not because of the emoluments of office. It is, in the main, because of a real concern for the welfare of the Common-

wealth ; because they are convinced that the administration of public affairs in the light of their party principles is essential to the salvation of the country. That—and, feeling they would be beaten at the polls, the human weakness ‘ to keep out the other fellows.’

MICHAEL MACDONAGH.

Midsummer in Ireland.

AMID 'the green hills of Erin' the midsummer fires still blaze at sunset on St. John's Eve, just as they did when the Danish invaders kindled them in order to illuminate the sun-god, Balder, on his downward path after the festival of the summer solstice, or in those more remote times when the Druids offered human sacrifices in their huge midsummer fires, as their forefathers did centuries before in Phœnicia, Persia, and Assyria, in honour of Baal or Bel, Moloch or Astarte.

There is little doubt that the custom of lighting fires on Midsummer Eve is of Eastern origin. Those who watch the Irish peasants driving their cattle between two blazing piles, or see the young men leaping over the glowing embers, as the bonfires sink lower, and the brief darkness of the midsummer night gives place to the rose-flush of dawn, can hardly fail to be reminded of that 'passing through the fire to Moloch,' so strictly forbidden to the Hebrews. Whole families pass solemnly between two fires, or spring backwards and forwards over the flames.

True, the simple country-folk imagine they are performing these mystic rites in honour of St. John the Baptist, for the early missionaries, finding it impossible to prevent their converts keeping the pagan festivals, transferred them to the saints, and midsummer was assigned to St. John—'the light to lighten the Gentiles'—instead of to Balder or Baal, and the bonfires were called '*Teine bheil Eoin*' (John's fires).

Some say that the fires were transferred from May Day or 'Beltane'—another important festival held by the Irish, Scotch, and British Celts in honour of Baal, or Belus—to midsummer; others, with more probability, assert that the two festivals were quite distinct. However this may be, May Day is still called 'Bealtaine' or 'Beltane' in both Ireland and Scotland.

Sometimes a bone is laid in the heart of the blaze—doubtless it represents the original human sacrifice; in fact, some derive the

word 'bonfire' from this practice, others say it is not *bone*, but *boon*, *bene*, or the French *bon*, because great virtues were accredited to the midsummer fires. In the West of England, where they lingered till recently, they were known as 'blessing fires,' and in almost every part of Europe they were supposed to bring good luck, an abundant harvest, and freedom from disease both to man and beast—an idea which is not yet extinct in Ireland.

In England and Scotland the fires were usually lighted at midnight; but in Ireland the great piles of wood, coal, or turf are lighted at sunset, and burn all night, the young folk singing and dancing round the leaping flames, their elders sitting by the embers, talking of bygone days, and telling wonderful stories of witch and fairy, chieftain and outlaw—all the wild romantic legends of Erin.

It is a pretty sight, far out in the green heart of the country, to see the fires springing, one after another, into ruddy light on the hillsides. In olden days no fire was kindled in Ireland on Midsummer Eve till the great pile on Tara Hill leaped into a blaze, giving the signal for a thousand Baal fires to gleam through the length and breadth of the land, from the Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear, from Dublin Bay to Galway. At a later period, Howth—the bold promontory on the north of far-famed Dublin Bay—was the starting-point, but for centuries each district and parish kindles the blaze when and where it pleases.

The great heaps of fuel may be composed of coal or coke, furze branches and brushwood, turf and bog deal, stubble and dried ferns—in fact, any material that can be obtained. A few twigs of the rowan or mountain ash almost invariably form part of the combustibles, for this tree is closely connected with the customs and superstitions of midsummer, and is considered an antidote to all kinds of witchcraft. A bundle of the slender withes of the hazel—another tree credited with magic powers—bound with 'a suggaun,' or rope of twisted hay or straw, is placed in the centre of the blaze by a 'wise,' or 'knowledgeable woman,' and a wisp of green rushes is also flung into the heart of the fire, sometimes accompanied by a bunch of 'the herbs of St. John'—such as mugwort, rue, plantain, vervain, and St. John's Wort—a custom also observed in Germany, Scandinavia, France, and Austria; but the practice of offering up the first fruits of the cattle and the crops has long been forgotten.

Till quite recently young people danced the ancient and picturesque 'Snake dance' round the fires, joining hands to form a long line, which curved and swayed in imitation of the movements of

a serpent, as they circled ever westward, following the course of the sun, whose revolutions, as well as those of a snake, were represented by this '*Rinceadh-Fada*.'

Dances of a modern type have completely taken its place, at all events, in the neighbourhood of towns and large villages; but it may occasionally be seen in a modified form in very remote parts of the country. Perhaps the '*fadé*,' or '*faddy*,' still danced in Cornwall on '*Furry Day*' (May 8), can be traced to this ancient Celtic sun-dance.

By the time the fires have burned low, the young men and boys remove their hats and coats, and jump backwards and forwards over the flames. Those who succeed in leaping the highest, and clearing the glowing pile thrice, are supposed to be secure from the powers of evil, for fire is considered a sacred thing, hated by witches and fairies, who are said to be very active and mischievous on this night, and are supposed to raise whirlwinds, in which they rush round the bonfires, hoping to extinguish them; but jumping over the blaze is a counter-charm, and if some of the flaming brands, or even a handful of the glowing ashes, are flung boldly at the '*sidhe gaoithe*' (whirlwind of the fairies), the 'good people' will have to fly.

If a boy and girl leap hand in hand over the blaze, they are supposed to be married before the year is out, and they will enjoy great felicity, and will always be faithful to each other. Riding on the same horse through the embers, the girl mounted pillion-fashion behind the young man, is said to have the same effect. As a rule, however, the girls wait till the fires have burned low—a very necessary precaution. She who can jump backwards and forwards three times without stopping may expect good luck and a husband before the year is out. After the girls have had their turn, the married women walk through the ashes, or between the fires, that their children may thrive, and their worldly goods increase. Then the elder men, sometimes on horseback, leap over the dying blaze, and the milch cows and young cattle are driven round or between the fires, that they may be free from disease and witchcraft till next midsummer. If there is only one bonfire, two persons often stand one at each side of it, bearing burning sheaves of straw or rushes, called '*cliars*,' with which they strike the cattle on the back or side, as they are driven by. Sometimes burning hazel-rods are used instead of the '*rushy*' cliars, and these are afterwards kept to drive the cattle with.

All this time shouting, singing, and storytelling have gone on

incessantly, and when morning comes, and the bonfire is 'black out,' everyone tries to secure a fragment of the charred embers, and it is thought very lucky if these can be brought home without crumbling to pieces or falling. Young men race each other to see who will get home first with the sacred fire, for he who does this will carry with him 'the luck of the year.' Finally the ashes are scattered over the fields to keep blight and mildew from the crops.

These customs, of course, are peculiar to rural districts; but in many towns the bonfires blaze on Midsummer Eve, and people watch all night beside them. In Cork, with its electric trams and factories, and many other signs of modern civilisation, the bonfire is a great institution, and for days beforehand men and boys go from house to house, asking for money 'for the bonfire,' and great heaps of fuel are piled up in every available open space in the higher ground about the poorer parts of the city, where, at sunset, the fires are lighted, and young and old flock from the neighbouring narrow streets and alleys, ready to sit up all night by 'the fires of St. John.'

The young people sing, dance, and play all sorts of odd games round the glowing flames, while their elders enjoy their pipes by the warm blaze, telling stories and lamenting over the vanished glories of 'the good ould ancient times,' before 'the rale ould shtock' had well-nigh died out of the land.

There are hosts of babies in arms, and countless older children play round the fires, in high delight at being allowed to sit up all night. Wonderful to relate, I have never heard of any of them tumbling into the bonfires or setting their scanty garments on fire.

Refreshments are not wanting, of course—who could sit up all night unsustained by 'a dhrop o' dhrink'?—to say nothing of such popular delicacies as 'crubeens' (pigs' feet), which are sold at nearly all outdoor gatherings in Ireland—races, fairs, hurling matches, and 'patterns.' Women bring baskets of these for sale, as well as biscuits, sweets, and apples, and the 'myvaun woman' appears with her bag of dried seaweed, which the Irish peasant, like the Scotch, considers a dainty. 'Myvaun' is a kind of 'dillesk,' or dulse.

The music is supplied by strolling pipers or fiddlers, or by a barrel-organ, or melodeons—known in Cork as 'gadgets'—horns, and whistles. Music-hall strains are beginning to oust the old national airs and songs from favour, and 'Dolly Gray,' 'Mr.

Dooley,' and 'Bill Bailey' are now heard as frequently as 'Garry Owen,' 'The Minstrel Boy,' and 'The Pretty Girl Milking her Cow'—the last, by the way, is said by the country-folk to be 'a fairy tune,' and they are careful not to whistle or sing it at night in the neighbourhood of a fairy rath, or well.

When morning dawns over 'the pleasant waters of the River Lee,' the whole band of fire-worshippers may be found wide awake at their posts, and in cases where the fires are close to their dwellings, the pots and kettles for 'the brekquist' are sometimes brought out and boiled over the dying embers, and 'the tay wet' beside the remains of the Baal fires.

This strange custom of sitting up on St. John's Eve was once almost universal—in fact, those who could not sleep were said to have 'passed St. John Baptist's Night'; but, except in Cork, I have never heard of the custom being observed in modern times in the very heart of a busy town.

Probably the practice arose from the fact that on this night all the witches, elves, demons, ghosts, and hobgoblins were abroad, and unusually malevolent, so it behoved good folk to stay watching by the sacred fires, lest the children or young girls should be stolen away, the cattle be bewitched, or any other evil fall upon the household.

Along some parts of the coast, especially in the south-east, the fishermen light the fires once more on the eve of St. Peter and St. Paul (June 29), in honour of their patron, and to bring luck to the boats; Stow informs us that the midsummer rites were repeated in London on the eve of St. Peter and St. Paul, and in olden days the Eton boys were allowed to have a bonfire on this festival as well as on St. John's Eve.

The midsummer fires still linger in the Isle of Man, some parts of Wales, and in many places on the Continent, including Brittany, the South of France, Malta, Prussia, and Austria. In the last-mentioned country they are lighted on the heights above the Danube, and are known either as '*Johannis-Feuer*,' or '*Sonnenwend-Feuer*' (solstice fire). In some parts of Germany the midsummer fires were solemnly blessed by the priest, and many flowers and herbs thrown into them.

In rural parts of Ireland odd love-spells are worked on Midsummer Eve. Girls gather St. John's Wort and yarrow, mugwort and plantain, the 'fairy fern,' and pretty blue speedwell, known in Munster as 'jump-up-and-kiss-me'—bringing them home, with sundry strange rites and incantations, and putting them under the

pillows, or the thatch of the roof, so that they may dream of their sweethearts.

It is said that the cuckoo is obliged to leave Ireland on Midsummer Day, and on the eve he is supposed to perch on a fairy thorn, a hazel, mountain-ash, or a fairy 'lis,' or fort, and sing a sweet and sad 'ullagone' (lament) for 'Green Erin,' knowing that next morning he must fly fast and far 'beyant the salt, salt say,' not returning till spring comes once more to his beloved Isle of the West.

MAUD E. SARGENT.

Above the Booms.

THERE was fear of war between us and the great Power whom, for fear of international complications, I will not dream of mentioning. Between the Lieutenant, Sergeant Harding, and the other sergeants who had left their country for their country's good to drill black men on the West Coast of Africa—between those patriotic men and the emissaries of that other Power, which, in its schemes for territorial aggrandisement, played Halifax with our plans for colonisation, ran the great river that should have been the boundary between the two nationalities. Truly it did not coincide with the boundaries of the native tribes which we and the other Power had found in occupation. But that was of no consequence whatever. They did not count. But what did really count was this. Sergeant Harding and some of his black lambs had, at one time, had a race with Captain Blanc and some of his ravening wolves belonging to that other Power whose name I will not mention, and Harding had won. On winning he ran up our flag at the town of Parda, which is on the other Power's side of the river. Captain Blanc was very angry about it, and used most uncalled-for language. But we were there, and we rested, although the other Power tried to chisel us out of our hard-earned land. I should like to know if they would have cleared out if Captain Blanc had bluffed Sergeant Harding, instead of Sergeant Harding having out-generalled Captain Blanc.

Now there was war in the air, and the lieutenant said to Harding, 'Sergeant Hardin', would you like a few days to go shootin'?'

'Where do you want to send me, sir?' asked Harding.

'My dear man,' said the lieutenant, 'I don't want to send you anywhere. I simply asked you whether you'd like a few days' leave to go shootin'.'

'If you please, sir.'

'If, by any chance, Hardin', you should take a boat's crew and go up the river to shoot—'

'Begging your pardon for interrupting, sir,' said Harding, 'there's much better shooting down the river.'

'That's where you're quite wrong, Hardin'. There's much better shootin'—of the kind you want—up the river. If you should take a boat's crew up the river, and should get up as far as where you would probably land if you wanted to get to Parda, you might just notice what fortifications or lines of defence Captain Blanc has been layin' down to prevent our gettin' up there.'

'Has he——' began Harding.

'So I understand.'

'So do I, sir.'

'What? Have you heard anythin'?''

'No, sir. But I understand, sir.'

'Right. And, if you should like to pick your men to-day, and make a start to-night, there'll be no objection.'

'Very good, sir. And I'll report to you as soon as I return.'

'Of course you will report to me for duty as soon as you return.'

That night, Harding, Big Tom, and a boat's crew started up the river. All the night they paddled hard. At least, the boat's crew did, while Big Tom steered and Harding slept the sleep of the innocent in the stern-sheets, soothed by the rhythm of the paddles, and by the voices of his crew as they bent to their work. Through the light of the tropical night they went, till the narrowing of the banks and the nearing of the trees on them turned the light into that blueness which is the depth of black. Then came the time of danger, for snags, and roots, and sleeping alligators, which can be seen in the light, are apt to give one a nasty fall in the dark. Yet the bold Harding slept on undaunted, for he knew that Big Tom, who looked on Harding as a bigger god than any idol from Birmingham, was at the helm and on the watch for danger. Then, suddenly, with none of the deliberation it shows in northerly climates, where getting out of bed is a weariness of the flesh, the sun sprang up, and so did Harding, who, after a refreshing dip, the while the crew beat the water vigorously to keep off man-eaters, rested again, this time with his eyes open, and watched the sweating niggers hard at work. There is nothing more pleasant than to lie in the stern of a boat and to watch other folk work hard.

At last, at long last, Harding and his crew approached the rough landing-stage whence the road leads to Parda, and, as they approached it, out shot a boat, the rowers of which sweated even more than Harding's rowers. In the stern lay a gentleman, whose

chin was nicely shaved, whose moustache was waxed, and whose boots were varnished.

'It is my friend, if he will so allow me to call him, Sergeant Harding,' said the gentleman, waving a kid-gloved hand which held a cigarette.

'It is, Captain Blanc,' said the unshaven and pyjamaed Harding.

'And I may call you that?' asked Captain Blanc politely.

'You may, sir, if you wish. You've called me worse things than that. Do you remember the time——'

'Certainly, my friend. But I do not wish to be reminded of it. I wish to forget what you call the time. Association with the dear English has rendered me more phlegmatic, more stolid. I should not say the same things now. Probably mixing with the English has made me more polite.'

'I shouldn't wonder, sir,' said Harding, almost blushing through the maiden's bloom of his brickdust-red face.

'And you were coming up to see me?'

'Not exactly, sir. Though very pleased to have the opportunity, sir, of course. I came up for a little shooting.'

'I am sorry. There is no shooting higher up the river than here. And I really flattered myself that you had come up to see me. It is so disappointing.'

'I think you must be mistaken, sir. I believe there is very good shooting up above. Of course, I also had in my mind the pleasure of seeing you.'

'Thank you—thank you, Sergeant Harding. You are most kind. Yet I can assure you there is no shooting above those booms which I have had slung across the river there. I assure you there is no shooting, and there will be no shooting above those.'

'But why, sir?'

'Because I say so, Sergeant Harding.'

'I beg your pardon, sir, for taking the liberty to correct you, but you seem to be a little mixed in your—that is, our—language. Perhaps it's because you're a foreigner, though I never heard you use English words wrong way up before. I think you've put the cart before the horse. You should say, you say there is no shooting because there is none, not there is none because you say there is none.'

'That is where you are quite wrong, Harding, and where I am perfectly right. There is none—for you—just because I say there is none. Do you know our two countries are on the verge of war? Of course you do. Then do you think we are going to have you

running up and down our river, landing on our territory, and generally laying your plans for the moment war breaks out? Of course you don't think it for a moment.'

'But there's no war now, sir, and you have no right to prevent my going up and down the river as I like.'

'My good Harding, I am not preventing your doing anything. Go up the river if you like. My country has nothing to say to yours on the subject. But I, personally, tell you that if you go above those booms you will find sufficient to blow a hundred of your boats out of the water. And this is a friendly warning between ourselves.'

'But it's illegal.'

Captain Blanc shrugged his shoulders.

'That may be; but, at any rate, it's there,' he said. 'If I had not had a kindly feeling towards you, I should have let you go up to buy your own experience.'

'You are very kind, sir,' said Harding.

'My nation are always noted for their politeness, Sergeant Harding. So you will probably allow me to wish you a particularly good day.'

'May I go back, sir,' asked Harding, 'and tell my commanding officer that you refuse to allow us to navigate the river or to land to proceed towards our protectorate of Parda?'

Captain Blanc merely drew up his shoulders to his ears and spread out his fingers with mute eloquence.

'Please let me have an answer, one way or the other, to take back,' said Harding.

'I can't give you an answer more than I have already done. I don't prevent your going on, but I warn you against the consequences. That is all.'

'But that will be no excuse to my lieutenant, sir. He will not be satisfied with that.'

'Now, really, Sergeant Harding, you are too straightforward. Since when have men purely on shooting expeditions found it necessary to report, except for duty, on their return?'

Harding got very hot. He had certainly given himself away.

'You will easily understand, Sergeant Harding,' said Captain Blanc severely, 'that, under the circumstances that war has possibly already broken out, I have gone beyond my province in telling you that we have already prepared the river in such a way that, if you pass our booms, you and your people are dead men. That information I gave you because I had a respect for you personally,

and had no wish to witness your destruction. And, while I was stretching my national conscience to do you a personal kindness,' he continued in a saddened tone, 'you, on your part, were up here simply, under the cover of a shooting trip, as a spy. Sergeant Harding, I request that, the next time you meet me, you do not acknowledge me in any way.'

'I'm sorry you take it like that, sir,' said Harding. 'There is no offence in it. It's all in the way of business. Yours, as well as mine, you know.'

'Not mine, please. We pay people to do this kind of thing, but we would not do it ourselves. You haven't even the grace to deny it. You admit, in a barefaced way, this conspiracy between your lieutenant and yourself. Sergeant Harding, I'm disappointed in you.'

With these words, and a sad expression, Captain Blanc signed to his rowers to pull away inshore. And Harding, feeling rather sick and sorry to think what a mean, despicable want-of-character Captain Blanc had proved him to be, and considerably sicker and sorrier to think he had found out nothing after all, turned his bow down stream, and began to drop down, down, down, just in the same way as his heart was dropping down, down, down, down.

'Something attempted, nothing done,
Against old England's foes,'

said Harding, 'according to the poet. Or is it "Won't buy the baby's clothes"? There's a falling-off for an old soldier! Sent up here to find out what the preparations of that hostile Power are, in case war is really declared, and I haven't found out a single thing, except that I'm a blooming fool who gives away the game. Paddle away, you ebony images! Carry on! Who told you to 'vast heaving?'

The niggers looked at each other, for they knew it was waste of time to paddle going down stream. Yet Harding was a white man, and was therefore to be obeyed, unless he were to be killed, and there seemed no reason, at the moment, to kill him; though the nigger does not always kill by reason only, nor does the white man.

'Paddle under the bank when we're round the corner,' said Harding, and then he laid himself out to think. The night came on, and the damp came up, and the alligators came round. Harding set a watch, and the rest of the black men went to sleep, while Harding sat in the stern, shivering and burning with the coast fever that the night mists had brought back to him.

'Big Tom,' he said, and the sentry lent a willing and capacious ear. 'Big Tom, suppose you were left here suddenly alone, how would you get back to the lieutenant?'

'In the boat, sar.'

'But suppose you had not got this boat?'

'I steal canoe, sar, b'long dem odder niggers ob Captain Blanc, sar.'

'If the niggers were properly roused you'd not be able to steal one.'

'I not rouse dem, sar. B'fore I sergeant, I leopard-man—can steal widout rousin' dem ugly black niggers.'

'Then off you go and steal one, and bring it back here.'

Then off went Black Tom, and stole one, and brought it back there.

'When the daylight comes, Big Tom, I'm going to jump those booms in the boat. There is no doubt we shall get over them all right. The only question is, what will happen to us on the other side. According to Captain Blanc we shall be blown up sky-high.'

Big Tom did not want to complain, but he evidently did not see the necessity of being blown up sky-high.

'You will not come with us,' continued Harding.

Big Tom evidently wondered how he was to be the only occupant of the canoe, who was to stop below while the others ascended. But, if Harding said so, it must be all right, and it was rather pleasing to Big Tom.

'You,' said Harding, 'will lie here in your canoe—I mean the other people's canoe, which you have stolen. You will watch what happens. As soon as—as—it has happened, you pelt back—none of your letting the canoe glide just because the stream happens to be with you, you just use your paddle—and tell the lieutenant just exactly what you've seen.'

'Tell um see you blow up sky-high?'

'Yes. If that's what you do see.'

'No. You stay canoe. Big Tom and odder niggers row dat boat over.'

'No, Big Tom. You must stay here.'

'How I tell properly to lieutenant? You tell much more better I.'

'That's true,' said Harding thoughtfully. To find a good, unselfish, benefit-of-your-country reason why one should not go deliberately to be blown sky-high is not unpleasant to any man.

'You stay den?' asked Big Tom delightedly.

'I can't send any man where I don't go myself,' said Harding. 'No, Big Tom, you'll have to tell the lieutenant as well as you can, and he'll have to worry it out with you. Now wake up the men.'

Big Tom woke them gently with a paddle.

'Get away into cover, Big Tom. Notice carefully everything that happens. I've drawn a small map of this part of the river and the booms. Here it is, and here is a lead-pencil. You can keep that in remembrance of me. You can't use it, but don't forget it's an H.B. When I'm gone, never forget that. Jot down, if you can manage it—and I should think you could—just where the explosions take place on the map, so that you can show the marks to the lieutenant, and take particular notice of the colour of the flames. All ready?'

'Good-bye,' said Big Tom, blubbing, as if he were not the only black man who wears the V.C.

'Paddle all,' said Harding, with a set, hard face, looking straight ahead at the booms across the river.

His crew paddled their hardest towards the obstruction. As they came to it they gave a few quick, strong strokes, and threw themselves back in the boat that her nose might get over. She jumped at it, and her 'midship section came down on the boom with a crash. For a moment she hung on, and then she slipped to the spot whence she had jumped.

'She'll break her back,' said Harding, 'if I do that too often. And then there'll be no telling what's laid on the other side. Lucky I brought an axe with me.'

He stood up in the bow and chopped and chopped till his hands, which grow softer when a sergeant is engaged in drilling a black regiment than when he is at Aldershot, began to sweat and blister. Meanwhile his niggers, who did not realise that they might in a few minutes be carried towards heaven in something like a chariot of fire, sat and grinned behind his back, and noted his expressions as choice bits of English for future use. At last Harding had cut away enough to let the boat through, and as he stood up forward, with the axe in his hand, and cried, 'Give way, all!' he could not help thinking what an heroic figure he made, going to certain destruction for his country. And then he wondered whether, after all his sacrifice, that thick-skulled Big Tom would carry back a decent report to the lieutenant, and he began to feel a little sorry that, being the white man of the party, it was incumbent on him to be the man to be blown up. However, there was not much time

for thinking about it. It would be a quick job now ; for the mines must be laid just above the booms.

Big Tom was waiting anxiously behind his bushes : anxiously, because Harding was his little tin god, and he did not want the tin god to return to its native heaven before the natural time ; anxiously, because he feared he would garble his tale—and then what would happen to Big Tom ? For the manner of the white man's reprimand is more severe on the West Coast of Africa than in Shorncliffe. He waited, waited, waited, and saw the boat go through the booms, and the crew paddle up, up, up, till at last they went out of sight round a bend in the river. And yet no terrific explosion shocked Big Tom's big and attentive ears ; no burst of various prismatic flames struck upon the retina of his observant, though rolling, eye. If only something would happen, he might manage to report it properly. But how to report satisfactorily just exactly nothing—no explosion, no flames, nought but the vanishing of the boat into the unseen ? And then, as the problem was beginning to be too much for his weak and anxious brain, the boat came into sight, running easily down with the tide.

'Come aboard, Big Tom !' said Harding exultantly. 'It's just as well I went up. There are no mines, no anything. The lieutenant will be glad to hear this.'

'No 'nythin',' said Big Tom thoughtfully, but without full understanding.

'No,' chuckled Harding ; 'we've found nothing but a big bluff, and that we found out.'

G. STANLEY ELLIS.

That Wonderful Evening.

WE were all in our old clothes ; shabby and comfortable and noisy and jolly ; certain that no one would come near us except the chosen two we had invited—cousins for whom nothing mattered, and who much preferred the schoolroom to the drawing-room that December afternoon, when the fog was so thick outside that you could scarcely see the lamps in the street, even the lamp just across the way, when—the door opened.

The door opened, and there she stood, the terrible great-aunt, whom the girls—I call my elder sisters ‘the girls’—*will* make a fuss about, now that they are grown-up, because she takes them to all sorts of horrid things that they never would have cared for at my age, and because they say she is ‘Kind,’ and all that. I don’t call it ‘Kind’ to swoop them off and never think of me—but I have got my story to tell, so sha’n’t bother with Aunt Cecilia’s tiresomeness.

She was the last person one would ever have expected to see out in a fog—though, to be sure, nothing stops her when she has got one of her ‘Projects,’ as she calls them, into her head ; and directly I saw her standing there, dressed as smartly as ever, and looking as pleased as if she were sure of her welcome in *my* schoolroom, I just knew she hadn’t come without a purpose which would spoil everything. Well, there she stood, and grinned all round.

Of course the girls jumped forward—they are always supposed to have such good manners—and you would have thought they were delighted. Perhaps they were ; I wasn’t. And I think Dick and Walter felt with me ; but one couldn’t expect them to show it, as men must be civil, especially to old aunts.

‘How cosy and merry you look, my dears !’ began she ; and then pulled off her huge sable boa, and panted. I knew she thought the room hot ; for there was a roaring fire at which we had been roasting chestnuts, and the schoolroom *is* small for five people.

However, no one could find fault with that smooth beginning ; and certainly we had been very ‘Cosy and merry’ a minute before,

and might have gone on being so but for the footman's stupidity in letting her in.

'I can't stop,' cried Aunt Cecilia next.

'Nobody wants you to,' muttered I under my breath—but I felt relieved; because though tea was over, and they had hardly left anything on the plates—everyone was so hungry, and they all said what a good tea I had provided for them—still, if Aunt Cecilia had wanted some, I should have had to ring up Jane, and get it for her.

'No, thank you, Adelaide,' continued our aunt (not thanking me, whose room it was—and I thought Adelaide might have remembered that, and not spoken as if she were the hostess). 'No, my dear, I really can't wait, and I have had tea besides.' (Of course she had—at a dozen places, most likely. She 'goes everywhere,' and I suppose has tea everywhere, greedy old thing.) 'What I came about was to see if you and Hilda would dine with me at the "Carlton" this evening.'

There, I knew it—I knew she had a 'Project'—and now there were the girls as pleased as Punch, purring over her, and hardly letting her get out her say for 'Thank yous.'

'I am so glad you are not engaged,' continued Aunt Cecilia, bending over her muff in that way she has which people call 'Gracious.'

'Delightful!' cried Adelaide.

'So lucky!' chimed in Hilda.

I will say that for them, they always stand up for Aunt Cecilia through thick and thin; so I knew they really were pleased and grateful and all that—and if it had been any other evening it would have been all right: I don't grudge them their fun, I'm sure—but it was nearly six o'clock, and there was Aunt Cecilia saying, 'We must dine at seven, or as soon after as you can manage it; for I have secured a box at the Vaudeville conditionally, and—'

I forget the rest—I forget everything but that Dick and Walter were included in the invitation, and that there was a regular hubbub, in the midst of which the ogress put on her boa, and tapping me on the cheek—me, whom she had used so cruelly!—said just as if she had done nothing:

'I shall have to include Jenny by-and-by. Oh, not for three years yet? But how tall she is growing!'

At which I jerked my face away, and regularly *girmed* inside.

Adelaide says I shall feel differently when the time comes; but I sha'n't. At least, I shouldn't if there were a poor little girl left

alone at home to spend her evening all by herself, and at Christmas time, too.

Of course Aunt Cecilia may not have remembered that father and mother were away, and for a moment I hoped someone would remind her of this. So did Dick, I fancy, for I heard him whisper aside :

‘I say, is Jenny going anywhere to-night?’

And Hilda answered rather quickly that I wasn’t, but that I had a number of parties in prospect.

‘Rather rough on her; why shouldn’t she come too?’ said he in a louder voice, as if he meant to be heard.

Oh, how my heart jumped! If Aunt Cecilia would—and she really wasn’t a bad old sort except for her ‘Projects’—but just as I was looking towards her, almost sure she was going to speak, Hilda struck in, never giving her a chance.

‘What are you thinking of?’ said she, with a laugh. ‘My dear Dick, a child like that dine at the Carlton? Besides, the play isn’t one for her at all,’ she added very demurely. Hilda can be awfully prim sometimes.

‘What is a play for her?’ said he, after a minute’s thought.

‘Oh, the pantomime,’ announced Miss Hilda—and I could have beaten her.

She would not have bestowed so much time on me and my affairs, only that Dick is rather an important family member, and everyone listens to him and answers him when he asks questions. He is rich and independent; and though not exactly handsome, there is something about him that I know the girls find ‘taking.’ Sometimes I hear them squabbling together over Dick. Not that either of them is in love with him; but if he began it, I don’t fancy Addy, or Hilda, or half-a-dozen others for that matter, would hold back. He has a good-humoured way of saying and doing just what he chooses; and I have heard other girls who come to visit ours say that he is ‘Tremendously run after’; and ‘So difficult to get hold of’; and that you have ‘To bait the hook’ for him; and a lot more of the same sort.

When I hear those remarks, though I don’t quite understand them, I feel most awfully pleased. I see that anyhow they can’t get Dick, *our* Dick, our own particular property, away from us, however they may try; and I see, too, that Addy and Hilda are secretly as proud of the fact as I—so that when that old ‘Project-monger’—that’s what I call Aunt Cecilia when I’m angry—beamed with her full-moon face upon her dear nephew (for Dick

is her nephew, that's to say her great-nephew as well as us—oh, what do I mean? Of course we are *Shes*, so we can't be either nephews or great-nephews), but anyhow, when she invited him to join the party, I knew why everyone seemed more frisky than ever, even though Dick didn't exactly accept.

He said he would go home and 'Look at his book.'

If anyone else had cheeked Aunt Cecilia by saying that, she would have withered him to shreds with that eye of hers; there is nothing she can stand less than what she calls 'The impudence of young men of the present day'; but to hear her cajole Dick you would have thought his reply the most natural thing in the world.

'We shall see you if you *can* come, then,' said she, ever so benignantly.

As for Walter, he was simply as keen for her party as the girls. I do hate that boy sometimes. He is always trying to get in with the grown-ups, and only condescends to any of our doings—of mine and my friends—if some of Addy's and Hilda's are taking part in whatever it is.

So of course *he* never gave a thought to my being left alone while they were so grand and fine at their 'Carlton' and their 'Vaudeville,' and was all in a hurry to get off to dress; in fact, he left before Aunt Cecilia did—having a long way to go, he said. Dick has rooms only about five minutes off, so perhaps Walter might be excused, especially as he has to get about in 'buses, and they do take an awful time.

Anyhow, he almost ran into his great-coat, and we heard the front-door slam the next moment.

Aunt Cecilia might have given him a lift in her carriage; and if he had been Dick I dare say she would—but people who have carriages don't generally give lifts to those who would be glad of them—and I don't believe she would have asked Walter to join her party either, only that she couldn't exactly leave him out. If *he* had said he would 'Look at his book'—but he knew better.

We all went out into the hall with our swell aunt; and when she was gone, the girls pushed me back into the schoolroom. There were a lot of their things there—presents and cards—but they only cried, 'Jenny, clear up!' as they flew upstairs, leaving Dick, for a wonder, without any ceremony. I suppose they thought it didn't matter, as they were to meet again so soon.

And the schoolroom that had even impressed Aunt Cecilia as comfortable and cheerful a quarter of an hour before, looked perfectly beastly now; with a litter on every table, and the messy old

tea-things all scattered about, and a sort of general hugger-mugger that even *I* felt, though I don't generally mind that sort of thing. It was the forlornness of it. It was the girls running away from it. It was the feeling that they all despised it—now. I just stood still, and something rose in my throat.

I didn't want to cry; that would have been too silly; but I wasn't going to 'Clear up,' which it was Jane's place to do if the mess was mine, and no one's if it was left by Addy and Hilda. 'Jenny, clear up,' indeed! The mean things. And I could hear their bell pealing for their Henriette, the French maid, who I hoped was out—at least, I didn't exactly hope it, but I felt it would serve them right if she were, and they had to dress by themselves for once. I was listening for the next sound, when it came from nearer than I thought, and made me start. Dick was standing in the doorway speaking to me.

I had taken it for granted he was gone; and somehow my hand went straight up to my eyes, and the fingers came away wet, which would have been terribly humiliating if he could be supposed to have seen, but I don't think he did; at least, he took no notice, and went talking on.

'Look here, Jenny, I don't fancy this "Carlton" business, and they'll get on just as well without me. What do you say to the pantomime for you and me? That's to say, if we can get some older person to keep us in countenance. Your governess, eh? What you think?'

Think? I could only gasp.

'Your mother has allowed you to go with me when I provided a chaperon before now,' continued he, talking rather fast, as if he saw I was half stunned; 'and Sophia would come again if we asked her, I dare say; but your governess would be better, if we could get her? She lives close by, doesn't she?'

'At the corner house. Oh, Dick!'

'Would she care to come?'

Care? My dear Miss Maberly, who was a regular martinet in school hours, and the dearest and most sympathetic of human beings out of them! If anything could have enhanced the pleasure (there now, that's the kind of phrase I put into my essays, and Miss Maberly always gives me 'Very good,' and sometimes 'Excellent' for my essays, so I shall just repeat it), if anything could have enhanced the pleasure of going to the pantomime—going with Dick, going straight off on the spur of the moment just as the girls were doing—it would have been sharing the whole

thing with my dear Miss Maberly, whom I am to be allowed to call 'Lina' directly schoolroom days are over.

Lina and I are going to be friends then. She is only a very little older than my sisters, and ever so much prettier, though they won't allow it. If she were better dressed—but she can't help that; she hasn't got the money to dress well. And she has to live by herself in a great big governess house she calls a 'Home,' where I sometimes go to tea, and don't very much like it.

It feels odd somehow; and, what is more, Lina doesn't look any more in her place there than I do. She makes the best of it, and says the 'Home' is quite run after, and that she is very fortunate to have got into it; but I don't know. Of course the great thing is her being near us, and I never was more glad of this than when Dick Davenant—that's his name, and I think it a beautiful one—asked where she lived? For, of course, if we had had to send miles and miles—well, we hadn't, and I knew what I felt: that the stars in their courses were fighting for us.

'Now, write, quick,' said he.

'Write? Won't a message do?' cried I. I often send William round with messages, and Miss Maberly is quite used to them.

Dick, however, decided on a note as more satisfactory, and as he dictated, it was done in a minute.

'You see we shall have to be quite certain she can go, as if she can't, I must see about someone else,' said he; 'and there is no time to lose. What have you said?'

And though I read it out, he looked over my shoulder to make doubly sure it was plain.

'My cousin wishes to take me to the pantomime to-night, but mother would not let me go without a chaperon, so he hopes you will be disengaged' (I had demurred to this, but he insisted on it), 'and will accompany us. If so, we will call for you in an hour's time. We are to dine at the "Dieudonnée" first.'

You may be sure I screamed when Dick added the last clause. To dine out as well! And I had never dined anywhere in my life—at any public place, I mean—and, of course, had always flouted them, just because I longed so dreadfully to see what they were like.

'It should have been the "Carlton," but that we might chance to have the next table to Aunt Cecilia,' said Dick, laughing; 'and that would hardly do, Jenny. Best to be on the safe side.'

That was while we were waiting for William to bring back Miss Maberly's answer. There was time enough while he was absent

for all sorts of terrible doubts and suppositions to assail us ; and I am sure Dick felt as bad as I did, for he kept walking up and down, and fingering the ornaments on the mantelpiece, and looking at his watch—while my mind ran on my new frock, and the fan I had been given to match it ; and oh, how I did gloat over the recollection that a pair of long white gloves had been bought for my parties only the day before, in case they should be forgotten, as had happened once before, when no one was thinking of me and my affairs.

‘Remember, Jenny, that I am coming here first for you, and that we shall go round for Miss Maberly afterwards.’

Dick was saying this for the third time, I believe, when William opened the door, and handed in a little three-cornered note. We both darted forward, and I thought Dick would actually have seized it, though it was directed to me, but he stopped and laughed, and his face—yes, it *did* get red, and he bit his lip, too, because it wasn’t quite good manners, you know.

It was only that he was excited on my behalf ; and that was so nice of him that I’m sure he might have torn Lina’s note limb from limb for aught I cared ; and when I shouted ‘Yes ; she’s coming,’ and danced round the table, waving it in my hand, he looked at me with his whole face one smile.

He spoke very quietly, however.

‘She’s coming, is she ? That’s all right. It will save a lot of bother ; for Sophia might not have been at home, or have had other engagements——’

‘And, besides, it is ever so much nicer to have Miss Maberly,’ I burst in, and then was ashamed of myself, for Sophia is Dick’s married sister, and he is rather fond of her. He did not seem angry, though. He only said cheerfully :

‘I have no doubt it is ; she will enjoy herself, whereas Sophia would only have gone for our sakes.’

As he spoke he picked up Lina’s note, which had dropped on the table, and looked it over, twisting his moustache thoughtfully.

I began to wish he would go, for there was now only three-quarters of an hour to dress in, and that is not at all too long for a pantomime, and a dinner at the ‘Dieudonnée’ ; but for nearly a minute he seemed to have forgotten where he was or what he was doing.

Then suddenly he woke up with a start, and in his hurry to be off slipped the note into his waistcoat-pocket. I thought it might vex him to be caught a second time doing something that wasn’t

quite polite, so I said nothing, and ran upstairs as fast as ever Addy and Hilda had done.

What a dressing that was! Jane seemed to enter into the spirit of it; she was going out herself, by the way, and the recollection that I could not even call her in to amuse me had added its sting to my desolate prospect an hour before—so that we had the gayest time.

When I was ready, she undertook to watch for Dick's cab, and let me know the instant it was at the door.

Meantime I cowered in the schoolroom. What if the girls should take it into their heads to peep in and see what I was about? They might. I put out the light, and hid behind the door. There was a faint glow from the dying fire, but they would never suppose me content with that; so, though shaking and shivering, I felt tolerably safe. The worst fear was lest our cab and their carriage should arrive simultaneously—and everyone knows how often such a *contretemps* does occur. It was not that I felt exactly guilty—my mother would have let me go anywhere with Miss Maberly and Dick,—but there would be talk and fuss, and somehow I knew instinctively that Dick would have disliked it, apart from his having shirked Aunt Cecilia's party for my sake.

All went well, however. Addy and Hilda were so late, in spite of the longer time they had had, that they rushed through the hall, and were off almost before I could draw a breath, and not half a minute too soon either.

I had barely emerged from the schoolroom when Jane's smiling face met me.

'Mr. Davenant is there, miss.'

'I'll run round before you, Jenny, and bring her out,' said he. 'Would you just stop at the pillar-box and post these?' And he handed me some letters.

When I got to the 'Home,' he was inside; but the door stood open, and in a few minutes they came out, and he ceremoniously bowed Lina in beside me. It did not strike me till afterwards that I ought to have introduced them; and as no one seemed to expect it, we just talked away—at least, Dick and I did—and the drive to the 'Dieudonnée' was over almost too soon.

It was not till we were in the great blazing place, and seated at our table, which was in a nice corner from which we could see all round (and they gave me the best place, facing everybody) that I noticed anything peculiar about Lina. She was dressed in her one best frock; black, with a pink rose in her bosom; and looked

very nice, though not smart like Addy and Hilda ; but there was certainly something about her, and yet I can't explain what. She was so terribly nervous, for one thing. When I spoke to her—I seemed to be the only talker of the party—she could hardly answer me ; she sat with her eyes down, and the colour went and came in her cheeks every minute. And how her hands trembled ! She could not keep them always in her lap, because though she ate next to nothing, she had to pretend. Dick would have her drink some champagne, too—though I could see she only did it at last to stop more being said. Through it all she looked so pretty—prettier than I had ever seen her ; and once or twice—well, I may as well confess it now—I caught a long, furtive gaze fixed upon her from under my cousin's eyelids that startled me.

Not that I should have minded my dear, sweet Lina being admired by Dick, or anyone—for indeed I was proud of her looks, and knew that they never made her vain or silly ; but what I felt was a sudden suspicion—it was more, it grew and grew every minute into the strongest conviction—that *Mr. Richard Davenant was not seeing Miss Caroline Maberly for the first time.*

'No, thank you, Dick.'

No, I could not have eaten another ice to save my life. I was thrilled with the wildest surmises ; my eyes were starting out of my head. *What was it ?* What was this mystery ? This secret understanding, or misunderstanding, between these two people, who seemed to shrink from each other—at least, Lina shrank and 'flushed and paled' as the books say—while even Dick seemed half afraid of what he was doing, and had the most curious face on whenever he addressed her ?

Never, no, never had I seen him look like that before. He could be merry and friendly with me, and pleasant and polite to the girls, but he wasn't the least little bit afraid of any one of us ; and he could treat Aunt Cecilia quite coolly, particularly when she bothered him with her 'Projects.' So that I could not help noticing it as a new thing, the timid, deprecating air with which our all-important cousin offered my poor little governess attentions that were quite ordinary and unavoidable. Oh, there *was* something, there *must* be something going on which I could not understand.

Lina tried to be natural and governessy once. It was when the band played a piece she had lately taught me. I was not listening ; how could I listen, thinking as hard as I was doing ?—so that when she said, 'You hear, Jenny, how much better that

sounds played a little slower? You remember, dear, I always told you it should not be hurried?' I said, 'Oh, yes,' without having the least idea what 'That' or 'It' was.

'Jenny is more taken up with the company than the music,' said Dick.

Company? It was his and Lina's company I was 'taken up' with, and for a minute I felt quite angry. He thought me a mere child!

By that time he had ceased to address Lina, or to attempt to soften her displeasure, if it were displeasure that kept her grave and silent. He even stopped talking to me; and I was glad when he suddenly started up, exclaiming:

'Now then, Jenny, we are not going to sit here all night, are we? We are forgetting the pantomime altogether, and that was what we came for, wasn't it?'

It was, but he did not speak as if he meant it; and he kept looking and looking at Lina, and when she dropped her handkerchief darted for it, and I am sure, yes, I am sure he—but never mind, I saw what I saw.

We were late for *The White Cat*, of course; but it didn't really matter, because a pantomime does go on for ever, and never seems to have a beginning or an end. So directly we were all seated comfortably in our box, we seemed to know at once what it was about; and at first I thought Dick and Lina were really interested, and even wondered if I could have been mistaken about them, and made a little fool of myself, as the girls sometimes say I do when I try to find out about their affairs?

Lina fixed her eyes on the performers; and Dick, who sat between us, turned his shoulder on me and leaned his elbow on the cushion, so that if we had not been right opposite the stage, his head would have been in my way. However, I told him I could see beautifully; and so I could—and we all sat quite still for a long, long time.

How long it was I don't know, I had forgotten all about everything but the queer old Fairy Asbestos and the splendid Prince Peerless and his brothers; I was living in their world, and none other was real or even remembered at the moment, when all at once I had the most awful shock. Oh, I can feel it now.

They had drawn back into the shadow of the box, those two. It was almost dark there; indeed, it was pretty dark everywhere, or else I surely should have noticed they had moved before, and I suppose they must have been talking some time, for this, in Dick's deep, rather gruff voice, distinctly fell upon my ear:

'You might have trusted me; but since it is all right now, I won't reproach you, Lina.'

Fairy Asbestos might have been Jack-the-Giant-Killer, or anyone else in creation, for aught I knew at that appalling moment. I can't think of it now without shivers.

But what I did was to sit as still as a mouse; for though I was afraid afterwards that I ought not to have gone on listening, it really was not my fault that I did. I simply was glued to the spot, as you are in a dream, when you want to get away from the bull and can't.

That was how I heard Dick go on:

'Of course, it was not "by pure accident"! I traced you step by step; but knew that if I scared my little bird, she would be off again before I could catch her; so I was worrying out a plan, when this cropped up in the very nick of time. "Poor and dependent"? My wife will be neither "Poor" nor "Dependent"—and from the first day I saw you, dearest, I made up my mind to win you for my wife, if I could. Oh, I am to "Take care," am I?' (Evidently Lina had hushed him up.) 'She won't hear. She's quite absorbed—'

'I'm not,' said I, suddenly wheeling round—and there they sat, hand in hand!

Perhaps I ought not to have done it, but I got frightened; it seemed so mean to have him thinking me 'Absorbed' when my ears were on the stretch, and my blood was dancing in my veins—and Dick, instead of being angry, burst out laughing.

'Why, Jenny, you've played Fairy Godmother to us!' cried he, and laughed and laughed again. And then he looked boldly into Lina's face—he was bold enough for anything now—and still kept her hand, though I saw her trying to draw it away. 'Jenny,' he said, 'there was once a very silly little princess who took it into her very silly little head that a prince who loved her was a despicable, unworthy fellow—'

'Oh, no; not *that*,' broke in Lina. There were tears on her cheeks, but anyone could see what kind of tears they were, and that she was simply radiant with happiness.

'They didn't understand each other, anyway,' continued Dick, shaking her hand softly up and down; 'and she thought to hide from him; but he only laughed to himself, and vowed he would search the wide world over but he would find her—and he did—at the corner house, Jenny.'

'And you thought I saw nothing!' said I, scornfully.

But I forgave him and went back to my place ; and I tell you truly, for the next two hours I never once looked round, though all the fairies and magicians in the world couldn't keep me from thinking and wondering to myself : ' When I am grown up, and have a lover, will he sit with me at the back of a box at the pantomime, and will there be a little girl in front keeping watch over us, who is almost as happy as we are, *but never once looks round ?* '

L. B. WALFORD.

The Birds and Beauties of an Old Orchard.

MY little orchard is not what a professional in matters horticultural would call a model one. Nature herein does not so much contend with Art as consort with it; and that as its 'better half.' For instance, that hedge, its southern sepiment, beyond which the blue-domed downs extend their undulating outline, is a huge mass of bramble, through which, here and there, a long shoot from a neighbouring plum-tree root or a bird- or wind-sown sapling ash pierces its upward way. But, in its season, what luscious berries beareth this bramble hedge, large as raspberries, beloved of birds and boys. And how the birds resort to its prick-protected shade, therein to build their nests. Year after year come, I know, the same thrushes and greenfinches, the same hedge-warblers and blackbirds, and with more or less success endeavour to fulfil the primitive promptings to perpetuate their kind. Never a season passes but some three or more feathered pairs attempt the precarious practice of nest-building and the rearing of their young. For hereabouts cats, rats, boys, and other vermin very much abound, to the great annoyance of bipeds, both birds and gardeners.

The ruddy-backed, cream-bellied weasel, too, takes his toll both of eggs and nestlings. Whether in the summer he indulges in fruit, from fancy or principle, I know not, but more than once I have seen him in my strawberry bed. But in spite of all these enemies, both small and great beasts, some broods are brought up successfully and launched upon the pleasant life of a bird: a life amid verdure and rapture; blossoms which they need not seek for; abundance of food they need not carefully prepare; amid every glint of sunshine, from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same; with all the delights of travelling, almost without effort, wholly without cost; and shelters from the rain

they alone know of, for who ever saw a wild bird wet? Nevertheless it is good to be an unfeathered biped; not to be bound to bed at sundown or to rise at the first cold gleam of dawn; to have some modicum of dominion over nature; to be able somewhat to lose oneself at will in the past; to dream, albeit desperately, of the future.

But to return to the birds of my orchard. No runaway couples act more secretly than most birds about their nidification. The first year the greenfinches graced my garden with their greenness, so quietly did they build their nest that though my favourite spot of shade that sunny summer was right under the canopy of the bramble hedge, and though I sat thereunder in the blazing afternoons reading and writing during several weeks, the first betrayal of their nest to me—so near as five or six feet—was by the fluttering of a young bird, prematurely practising a flight. During all this time the father bird had sat and sung his sleepy song in a hedge full fifty feet away, no doubt with intent to deceive. But most of the activities of a bird's life, and more especially its nest-building, are acted from the rising of the sun unto his zenith; whereupon comes a great stilling of song, and a meditative mood, becoming to meridian, seems to brood over all. The blackbird, almost alone, is one that sings—otherwise than casually—at noon, and his deep rich voice has a dreamy melancholy, as the best of music ever has. He, too, sometimes builds among my brambles, and then with what care is he cared for withal; with green boughs artfully guarded from the greedy gaze of bird's-nesting boys; with strong, new boughs of spring hawthorn armed against his approach. Not always, alas, with success. On one occasion the eggs were taken, but the nest left; and, curious to relate, in about a week the bird laid again, and ultimately the persevering parents reared the brood in safety.

There is so much individuality about the songs of thrushes and blackbirds that the outdoor naturalist can recognise, in most cases, the peculiar bars and notes of some particular songster, and so identify the individual bird during a succession of seasons. Thus I know that two particular pairs of thrushes have built their nests for several years following in my orchard. One songster haunted my neighbourhood during four seasons; the other for three years, and he is still hereabout. Less common than the song-thrush, and a much larger bird, the missel-thrush frequents this locality, and last year a pair built their nest in a tall old pear-tree, and reared four young ones from their pale blotched and

spotted eggs. The song of this thrush has a singular resemblance to that of the blackbird, but is of less compass, and is pitched in a higher key. In this same bramble hedge have the lesser whitethroats built their nest in two successive years. More plainly tinted than the common whitethroat, this bird has also a song—if such it can be called—equally plain; in fact, a most monotonous voice, with a peculiar rattling reiteration. Its eggs are remarkably unlike those of the common whitethroat, when one considers how similar these birds are in their appearance, their nests, and their habits.

But of all the builders in the bramble hedge, the hedge-warbler, that bird, first cousin to the robin, and commonly but wrongly called hedge-sparrow, bears away the palm for beauty of nest and brilliancy of egg-colouring. Without a feature similar to the house-sparrow—that garden pest—it is difficult to discern the reason for his common name, for in many ways he has quite distinctive features. Imprimis, he has a pretty warbling song; he is coloured a soft brown, with blue-grey tints about his head and throat; while his red legs are very distinctive; and the blue of the eggs, as they lie snug in their hair-lined, moss-edged nest is absolutely unique. Possibly it is the brightness of their blue that betrays the nest to the wandering cuckoo when seeking to transfer parental duties to a proxy.

On the west side of my orchard, over a trellis, intertwines and hangs a high hedge of briar; a fair, rare sight when in June its greenery is gemmed with roses gleaming thick as stars in sky. But, for reasons best known to themselves, no birds ever build therein; though, when the flowers have long faded and in their stead reign red ripe berries, then they visit it with gusto.

On the north side of the orchard is the timbered end of an old barn, and a long brick wall, moss-topped and grey with lichen; its mortar riddled with a thousand nail-holes, very eloquent of the industry spent upon the training of their wall-trees by generations of gardeners long gathered to their rest. An admirable nidus is this mortar for the growth of that graceful little plant the wall snapdragon, whose trailing masses and festoons are gemmed with sparkling little flowers, summer after summer, let it be never so droughty, or the winter never so sharp and enduring in frost. Against this northern wall grow ancient pear-trees, interspersed with currant-bushes; and in the midst a somewhat sprawling but very fruitful fig, well known and oft resorted to by every blackcap and his kindred within the near neighbourhood.

The fig-tree is one that flourishes very fruitfully in Sussex; perchance being specially blessed in that Archbishop Becket first introduced it into England; as tradition says, on his palatial estate at Mayfield, or, as others say, at his manorial seat at Terring, near Worthing. In the red or white currant bushes build sometimes the cheerful-voiced hedge-warblers, who rejoice in refreshing themselves in due season with the juicy berries for all their labour and pains in providing grubs and caterpillars for their young. Not far off—namely in my neighbour's garden—build every year a pair of pied wagtails, and all the summer they and their family resort to my moss-topped wall as to a promenade. Spotted fly-catchers, too, which also nest near by, use it as a vantage place from which to launch themselves in pursuit of gnats and flies, smacking their lips audibly upon each ephemerid they seize.

From the old barn aforesaid come every eve a family of 'flittermice'; both the small common and the great long-eared bat. When the twilight has deepened into dark, from the same sanctuary owls issue, and on silent wings sail the circuit of their solitude.

In the midst of the orchard stands an ancient Pearmain apple tree, leaning with a very venerable stoop northwards, like a great gnomon over the green dial-face of the sunlit grass. Hollow as this old tree is, in three compartments, for several foot-lengths of its trunk, it still yields yearly a fair average crop of its ruddy, useful fruit, albeit it is near its threescore years and ten. In this fruition the birds not only take that share in anticipation of which they sing joyously among its branches, but they find in this old tree nesting-places secure from weathers and from beasts of prey. Most years two pairs are in simultaneous occupation of the hollows in this tree; during one nesting season three families of different kinds were reared in the security they afford. For then, in the topmost hole a pair of starlings placed—one can hardly say built—their straw-and-feather nest; in the middle hole blue tits reared their abundant brood; while the lowest a pair of great, or ox-eye, tits chose for their nursery. As the starlings reared another brood, what time they had rested somewhat from their first labours, this old apple-tree must have assisted, by the accommodation it afforded, in launching at least twenty young birds into the world within the space of a few months. Nor are these the only kind of birds which resort to this old tree. In the springtime I have seen the great green woodpecker hammering on the gnarled bark for woodlice and for earwigs, or prospecting, maybe, for a suitable situation for its nest; unfortunately—for

such as delight in birds—with a negative result. The beautiful large-spotted woodpecker has also visited this tree, doubtless on like errands intent. But the rarest of all the birds which have found a temporary home in this hollow apple-tree is that beautiful, queer bird, the wryneck, which some years ago successfully reared a brood within the upper chamber. Every spring does it revisit this tree, peer anxiously around and within, but never since has it ventured to build here again. Very interesting it is to watch, near at hand, this usually so shy bird; how it twists its neck rapidly in every direction—hence its common name—as if its head were set on a ball-and-socket joint; how it bows and bends its body; and how it thrusts out its long slender tongue. Seen near at hand it is a beautiful bird, tenderly tinted, peppered, streaked, and speckled with brown, buff, and purple-grey. But in its beauty it is much surpassed by its full-fledged young, which are finely coloured in shades of blue- and purple-grey, with yellow beaks and legs. I have never seen this bird in my orchard before April, by which time the starlings, who, like the poor, are ever with us, are well advanced in their nest-building in the old tree, and thus it is, perhaps, that never since that first occasion have the wrynecks found a home there too. Or can it be that that one white egg (was it not a little one?) which I took from them is still remembered, regretted, and revenged? Who can tell what passes through or remains in a bird's head? One little fact I well remember, and, as being *à propos*, I will here relate. One of my neighbours had a young rook which became so tame that it would come at the call of its owner, and was consequently allowed to wander at its will. Its strong vegetarian tastes led it too frequently to patronise my green peas. After enduring its thieving propensities during two seasons, in which no guy, or even gun, could scare it, and no clipping of its wings be procured by threats or persuasion from its owner, I at last exclaimed one day, when seeing the culprit in his crime, 'I shall shoot that bird.' From that day forward I never had the chance of a shot at it, although I often lay in wait, as I thought, secretly, to shed its blood. Nevertheless the bird still took my peas—and that right early—and eventually removed with his owner to some far abode. I am firmly persuaded that this rook, if he did not understand my threatening words, at least sufficiently divined my purpose so to order his comings and his goings as to save his own skin.

Nearly allied to the wryneck is another frequent visitor to my orchard, the little tree-creeper. He has a rapid, frequent song—

if such we can call his succession of notes—quickenings towards its close, and very lively movements as he runs up and down and around the tree-trunks in search of insects. His plumage is prettily speckled with brown and buff above, a light grey beneath. He has a long, curved bill; and his tail feathers are stiff and sharp-ended, which evidently assists him in his evolutions about trees. He sometimes builds his nest in my orchard, behind the weather-boards of the old barn; singularly enough, never in the holes in the trees, being warned off perhaps by the starlings. A congenial bird to the tree-creeper is the larger and scarcer nuthatch. There is no bird perhaps more harmoniously coloured. His head and back are of a delicate blue-grey, and his under parts a beautiful cream colour, with a tint of pink in it; while, to emphasise these, he has a black band running from his beak towards the side of his neck, and black corners to his square-shaped tail. He frequents the topmost twigs of trees, unlike the tree-creeper, which nearly always begins his runnings and creepings at the bottom of the trunks; even at the very root thereof.

Nightingales often visit my orchard, but make no long abode there; and I have not detected, though I once suspected, the presence of their nest somewhere in or around it. For be it confessed they have not always been welcomed in this neighbourhood; and it is even on record that a certain resident in this village shot these birds on sight, because, forsooth, they disturbed his sleep; and this albeit he inhabited a house where once Gilbert White was wont annually to visit for many years together. But though the nightingale has not favoured my orchard by choosing to make his nest anywhere within it, his 'understudy'—if one may use the word in such a connection—the blackcap, has more than once built in the bramble hedge and successfully reared the broods. The song of this bird is so rich, and of a quality so peculiar that when the blackcap sings one need not pine for Philomel.

Among other visitants to the orchard are linnets, yellow-hammers, and chaffinches, the latter being the most common, though, curious to note, they have only once built in any of the apple-trees which one would have thought most appropriate sites for their moss-made nests. Robins and wrens, of course, both dearly beloved of children—who indeed, speaking generally, know no other birds—greatly abound; nor are they silent or easily abashed; the robins often entering the house, to the great dismay of superstitious servants.

Both these kinds of bird build very often in my orchard; the

wren by preference in a little yew-tree in the hedge, the robin in such choice chambers as are afforded by a discarded watering-can or the crown of a battered felt hat. Sometimes a goldfinch or two, or in the autumn a family of them, pay a flying visit here. One afternoon last autumn, I remember, they came and sat conversing in their sweet, cheerful way, on the nether sunny side of the bramble hedge, for the space of a full half-hour at least; while I sat near by, silent, attentive, and appreciative, I hope, albeit they spake not in the vulgar tongue.

But of all my orchard visitants the starlings are the most noticeable. Every year they build behind the weather-boards of the old barn, as well as in the upper hollow of the apple-tree. If these birds were not so common, or so mischievous like their kinsfolk the jackdaws, we should look with an unalloyed pleasure on their beauty. For lovely in the springtime is the sheen upon their green and purple plumage; and though their song is not melodious, it is full of a rapturous joy that swells their throats and sways their bodies as they strive to utter all they feel or think. Starlings, as far as my knowledge goes, are the only British birds which have a tendency to decorate their nests. I have often seen in their nests the flowering end of a bean-plant, a sprig of ground ivy, or other similar plant, while the few feathers they use in them are very often of bright colour. In the late summer, when their labours are past, I have known them put little windfall apples into their disused nest. Arduous indeed must be the labours of feeding four or five young nestlings; little wonder that after it the song is taken out of most birds. I have often timed for an hour or two together, in the long summer afternoons, the frequency of the visits which the old birds make to their greedy offspring. Every four minutes, on an average, did these persevering parents dive into their arboreal nursery, not without preliminary screams, carrying food to their clamouring young. Beginning as they doubtless do at daybreak, and continuing until eve, it can easily be calculated that, working a double 'eight-hours day,' they must destroy 240 grubs or caterpillars and other small game grievous to gardens between each rising and each setting of the sun. Therefore it is a wise thing to spare birds and cherish them, and to spend the money-cost of powder and shot on superannuated fishing-nets and other simple protectors of our fruit.

Sometimes those tiny birds, the golden-crested wrens, appear in my orchard, and one year built their partially pendent nest in a neighbouring yew-tree. Every year, soon after Lady-tide, comes

the grey-green chiffchaff, with his welcome call that seems to usher in the spring. Somewhat later appears the willow-wren, his near kinsman, and sings almost ceaselessly his strangely sweet song, which, beginning high up in the scale, descends like rippling water, till it fades slowly into silence. Next of kin to this sweet warbler is the larger and less common wood-warbler, which comes into my orchard every autumn—I know not why at this time, and then only—flits silently about for a few days and then as silently departs. He is a beautiful bird, very elegant in shape, with plumage of a delicate green and yellow.

Not my least welcome visitants are the swallows, who every year nest in the old barn or under my eaves. Their favourite resting-places are some bare dead twigs of the apple or pear trees, where they sit and preen their beautiful plumage, or rapturously utter their sweet twittering song.

But birds are not the only visitors, winged and wonderful, to my old orchard. The bees of all my neighbours hum busily among the apple-blossom, and the wild bee, black, banded, and tawny, sometimes makes his nest among the mossy grass beneath the trees; while the beauty of the voracious wasp almost extracts some—*post-mortem*—pardon for his ravage. Butterflies of several hues abound hereabout; in one season one kind predominating in numbers, the next year another. The brightly coloured ‘clouded-yellow’ butterfly is one very typical of this seasonal variation. In the autumn numbers of that handsome butterfly, the Red Admiral, appear in the orchard, attracted doubtless as much by fruit as flowers; and, be it whispered, how dearly he loves a rotten pear! He appears to be fond of admiration, too, for how majestically he fans himself in the hot sunshine, or pirouettes upon the petals of a favourite flower; and I have even seen him suffer a little child to stroke his velvet wings.

These be some of the beauties of my little orchard; I say some, for, as a certain wise man says, ‘We know more from Nature than we can at will communicate.’

W. HENEAGE LEGGE.

At the Sign of the Ship

IN the last number of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE I quoted a letter from India, with a description of a piece of jugglery. Water flowed, at the conjurer's word, from an apparently empty cocoanut shell, also from a British teacup, offered by way of experiment to the conjurer. He invoked the monkey, a sacred animal in some parts of India, as the agent in the performance. There was difference of opinion among the witnesses as to whether traces of the fallen water were present on the soil. In a Malay case, witnessed by Mr. Hugh Clifford, C.M.G., there was no trace of water on the floor of the room, where he saw water milked, so to speak, by the conjurer, from the blade of a *kris*, or crooked Malay knife. On this curious subject a correspondent, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service, writes to me as follows :

'DEAR SIR,—Your note about Indian juggling in "At the Sign of the Ship" in the June LONGMAN'S.

'I have more than once seen the trick of making water pour out of an apparently empty cocoanut performed by jugglers. Of course, I have not an idea how it is done, but I think the water must have been real, for I should assuredly have noticed if the ground had not been wet. Unfortunately, my attention was never directed to this point at the time, so I cannot be certain. Anyhow, the trick is by no means uncommon, and any of your Indian correspondents would probably with very little trouble find a man who could perform the trick.

'As to the monkey's skull, so far as my memory goes, it is invariably a part of the paraphernalia of every respectable conjurer in India. It is part of the patter to appeal to the monkey at intervals. It is noteworthy that when performing before ladies who do not know Hindostani, they use the English word "monkey," not the Hindostani "bandar." Thus during some piece of incidental hocus-pocus they will continue muttering over and over again, "*Ā rē, monkey, ā*"—i.e., "Come, O monkey, come"—or possibly, "*Arē*

mankiā," "O monkey." The two phrases are pronounced similarly, and it is impossible to say which is intended. "*Mankiā*" is a Hindostani bastard form of "monkey," and is a sort of affectionate diminutive in the vocative.

'This phrase is so typical of Indian jugglery that one hears Anglo-Indian children (or the servants) using it when playing with servants, in the verandah, at being jugglers. I have often heard it under such circumstances, and have used it myself when performing little conjuring tricks for Anglo-Indian children. They quite accepted it as a necessary part of the show, even when I was playing schoolboy tricks with a handkerchief or a piece of string.'

* * *

As my correspondent's attention 'was never directed' to the question, Was the ground wet where the water fell, or seemed to fall, in the trick? one cannot be positively certain that the water was 'real,' and not an illusion caused by 'glamour,' as in Mr. Clifford's case, and perhaps in the other cited, where witnesses differed. None of us knows how vague, at best, is our attention, especially if it be eagerly fixed on one point, how readily it evades other collateral points. This fact in human nature is the vantage ground of all conjurers, and is the cause of all defective arguments that are not consciously and dishonestly defective. The cricketer, before receiving the ball, looks all round the field to see where the hazards of cricket, the fielders, are placed. But, in conducting a ramified argument, the attention of the disputant is fixed on proving his preconceived theory, and he not only fails to observe conspicuous objections, but very often forgets what he himself has just said, and falls into patent self-contradictions. Attention, wakeful all along the line, is the one thing needful, and, in this business of the water, my correspondent's attention 'was never directed' to the essential point, 'at the time.' Later memory, therefore, may be, but need not be, correct.

* * *

An instance is given by Dr. Richard Hodgson, who has studied Indian conjuring. An officer and his wife saw a conjurer who, I think, was whistling to a set of coins, which moved at the music. The officer said, 'Can you do it with a coin of mine?' and the man did it. The officer, telling the story on the day of the event, was asked, 'Did you lay your coin on the ground yourself?' 'Yes,' he replied. His wife differed: she said that the conjurer took the coin

from his hand, and laid it on the ground. Dr. Hodgson knew that this was the essential part of the trick: the officer's wife had directed her attention to the right point; the officer had not, and was firmly convinced that he himself had laid the coin on the ground.

* * *

It is odd that though I have read everything that I can find about Indian conjuring (except Jacoilliot's work—a large exception) and have listened to many oral reports, I have never met the water trick before. The monkey part of the 'business' I never heard of till the use of a polished monkey skull was mentioned to me by Mrs. Steel, the author of excellent novels of Indian life. Yet the water trick seems to be as common as it is puzzling, and the monkey 'business' is apparently universal. English observers and narrators appear to be rather vague and casual, though many are interested in the subject. A book of Mr. Maskelyne's, *The Supernatural?* said nothing on these points, I think, while explaining the mango-tree trick, or part of it—a very simple case of legerdemain, as explained. The late learned Colonel Yule, whom I knew well, never spoke or wrote, as far as I know, about the water trick and the potent monkey. In short, the whole subject is practically unexplored. Will no Anglo-Indian, with practical knowledge of European conjuring, make a complete study of Oriental jugglery? Some jugglers, if not all, are ready enough to sell their secrets 'for a consideration.' The juggler, of course, is not the *Yogi*, whose feats—if feats he does, which I doubt—depend on extreme austerity. A European could not train for the *Yogi's* life, nor would the game be worth the candle.

* * *

The winning of the first Test Match by England was rather a surprise to me, who had seen Mr. Armstrong's cavalier treatment of the Gentlemen's bowling at Lord's, and the feeble resistance made by most of our batsmen, while the precedents set by Lancashire and Yorkshire were very depressing. However, the Gentlemen lacked Mr. Jackson and Mr. Bosanquet. The bowling of Mr. Bosanquet, on occasion, seems, as Admiral Togo says of his own success, to be more than human beings could achieve, and mainly due to 'the virtue of the Emperor,' and the action of Mr. Bosanquet's ancestral spirits, French and Huguenot, one ventures to guess. What is meant by this amateur's 'leg break with off

theory,' as the newspapers call it? The terms are too metaphysical. Does the ball break in from leg and then from the off? If so, nothing less than ancestral spirits can account for the contravention of the laws of nature. Or does the ball pitch on or outside of the leg stump, and then break towards the batsman's legs? But a left-hand bowler whose ball 'follows the arm' does that, and yet his deliveries are not called by the strange name 'googlies.' Consulting Mr. Warner's work on *The Ashes*, we learn that Mr. Bosanquet 'sends down an *apparent leg-breaker*' (very swift, indeed, must be a 'leg-breaker'!) 'which breaks back very quickly.' 'An *apparent leg-breaker*' probably means a ball which the batsman expects to break from leg, but which does the reverse. The batsman, knowing this, might be expected to get his legs in front of the off stump, as the *coup de botte* is now a recognised stroke in the game, though originally practised in France. The papers say that one of our team, at Nottingham, kicked away Mr. Armstrong's breaks from leg, and secured leg-byes. Such is the *coup de botte*: when the stroke was applied to my bowling by a late learned cricketer and headmaster, very many years ago, I did not think it exactly cricket, but something more in the nature of football. I remain of the same opinion, and do not think that anything except the bat should be *purposely* used for run-getting. If our law-givers were of the same mind, they would pass a rule making the batsman who deliberately kicks balls 'out,' as in the case of obstructing the field. Is he not, in fact, obstructing the wicket-keeper? In any case, if you may kick away real 'leg-breakers,' you may kick away 'apparent leg-breakers.' If we had bad luck in losing the services of Mr. Fry and Hirst, the Australians were still more unfortunate in Mr. Trumper's accident during the course of the game. They are an even unexpectedly strong team; their bowling, as in the case of Mr. Laver, has unlooked-for resources, and nobody can feel sure that we shall retain the coveted 'Ashes,' so named, long ago, by Mr. Punch. If Authors are to play Actors at Lord's, as one hears that they will, now that all our best cricketers—amateurs and players—are copious authors, the Actors must have a very poor chance of victory. Are Authors to be defined as Novelists, Poets, Essayists, and Historians who only play cricket by way of *parergon*? That would be fair. But if all Authors may play, the Actors will have to meet an All-England Eleven. A match of Science *v.* Literature, or of Poets *v.* Novelists, would be amusing, but Lord's is hardly the arena for such jocular contests, on a par with One Leg *v.* One Arm.

Among cricketing authors is the gallant and graphic 'Linesman' of the South African war book. Many have thought that 'Linesman' was apt to be run away with by his Pegasus. The *Publisher's Circular* observes, as to his work as a reporter of cricket: 'He seems to understand cricket, but is compelled by his reputation to write thus: "England blazed up into magnificent might from the dying embers of black despair. . . . MacLaren was all that he has been at his very best, meaning an inspired judgment in discrimination and almost superhuman power. Those long arms stretched out to flout the ball with an athletic sweep that attains to the majestic—MacLaren's batting yesterday [May 30] produced a grandeur of its own."' It is better to stretch out one's long arms than one's long legs 'to flout the bowling.' But I really prefer the old 'Jones took the leather, but the separation came from the other end' to this

Demoniac-seraphic
Penman's latest piece of graphic.

Mr. MacLaren is not really inspired, and 'Linesman,' like Mrs. Hemans, seems 'too poetical.'

* * *

Dr. Munro's book, *Archæology and False Antiquities* (Methuen), though vastly interesting to myself (who come in for refutation), leaves room for another volume in 'The Antiquary's Books.' A history of 'fakes' of works of old art would be most interesting, and most useful to the collector of pictures, engraved gems, terra-cottas, coins, furniture, weapons, and many other desirable objects. The topic is rich in amusing anecdotes and serviceable lessons. An exhibition of 'fakes' of all sorts, say in the rooms of the Burlington Fine Arts Club, would be an entertaining and edifying show. All collectors have been taken in, and examples of impostures could be readily provided. But Dr. Munro touches little on objects coveted by the collector, from old postal stamps to *biberons* sold for 15,500*l.* He starts from a human jaw of doubtful authenticity found in a 'sandy feruginous (*sic*) seam' in the Somme Valley. The discoveries of M. Boucher de Perthes were in 1858-63 rather scouted by the learned. M. de Perthes (a collateral descendant of Jeanne d'Arc) offered 8*l.* for the finding of a human bone among his chipped flints, and in eight days a piece of bone was found protruding from 'a feruginous seam.' The coincidence of reward and discovery was suspicious. The jaw, which had a very protrusive chin-

bone, was confessed not to be that of an individual of the race now inhabiting that part of France. It was thought, however, to have been the property of an individual buried, thousands of years ago, at a place fifteen miles from the spot where it was now discovered. This seems a very likely guess, but M. Boucher de Perthes, in whose presence the jawbone was unearthed, thought that 'his personal veracity' was called in question. That was natural, if illogical. Nobody likes to be regarded as either a knave or a dupe. But we are all dupes now and again. Dr. Munro gives a case in which I was (provisionally) caught by a 'Highland Magic Stone.' It *was* a Highland magic stone, quite undeniably, for it was used for the magical healing of cattle. I wrote in a newspaper (October 13, 1903) that it 'appeared to be a Neolithic amulet,' and, 'if so, it *may* supply a missing link in my argument.'

* * *

I was premature. After writing thus I took the stone to the British Museum, where the highest authority amused and instructed me by proving that the stone had been the pivot of an elementary Scottish gate; placed between an upper and nether stone, it enabled the gate to swing round, and in the process concentric circles were marked in the ends of the pivot stone. The farmer who made that gate was, as far as the mechanism went, a Neolithic man of the eighteenth century A.D. Some Highlander, picking the stone up and not knowing what it was, kept it in a curious box, and used it for healing cattle. No doubt it acted 'as good as a better' on the bovine patients. I wrote 'at all events, it is a curious survival of very ancient practices,' and 'that you may lay to.'

* * *

Before anyone could expose my hypothesis of the antiquity of the magic stone, I did so myself in a letter to the newspaper of October 16. Then came forth a pseudonymous person signing himself 'Sparkbrook.' He wrote a letter in which he said the thing that was not true, and Dr. Munro unwarily publishes his letter, which I never saw before. 'Sparkbrook' declared that I had told the public that 'I had found the missing link' in my argument. I never wrote anything of the kind! I said that 'if' the stone were, as it 'appeared' to be, of a certain age, 'it *may* supply the missing link in my argument.' One could not make a statement more frankly hypothetical. Therefore I do not see why Dr. Munro should publish the letter of the pseudonymous person, who, of

course, wrote in his haste, and not 'with intent to deceive.' Dr. Munro elsewhere admits that he is not certain he has not himself been beguiled into accepting as genuine objects which may be the reverse. But in this case I think that he is too diffident.

* * *

From the jaw Dr. Munro goes on to discuss other forgeries of very ancient objects not treasured by collectors in general. One case is the Breonio controversy about odd things in chipped flint found in Italy. The late M. de Mortillet denounced them as fakes, but he did as much in the case of Dr. Schliemann's finds at Troy. Five great Italian authorities held that the objects were genuine, and as for M. de Mortillet, he had never seen them! He was a violent 'anti-clerical' (he had been a 'dowser,' or water-finder, in youth), and he dragged the Church into the squabble! Then a Polish professor found similar objects near Cracow, and they, in turn, were called fakes. A special committee of the Cracow Academy of Sciences pronounced in favour of the objects, and others like them were found at Volósova in Russia; in fact, these had been noted as early as 1870, long before the Breonio finds. M. de Mortillet denounced the Russian things as fakes. So it is a very pretty quarrel. I am rather against M. de Mortillet, whose periodical, *L'Homme*, used to be styled *L'Homme Mal Élevé*.

[* * *]

Dr. Munro next tackles the Calaveras skull, which is known because Mr. Bret Harte made fun of it. What a merely literary man says does not count, but it is pretty plain that whether the owner of the skull came 'from old Missouri' or not, he did not live in the Tertiary period. Half the volume is devoted to disproving the authenticity of the queer things found in 1896-1900 in the Clyde estuary, and, lastly, we come to the fraud on the Louvre, who, appropriately on April 1, 1896, announced their purchase of a gold Græco-Scythian tiara and collar for 8000*l.*! The 'tiara' is a conical cap, in gold, with ornamental designs, and figures of men and beasts in relief. A Russian artist has acknowledged that he faked this treasure on the lines of fragments said to be ancient. There is said to be 'a learned archæologist behind all'; he was too clever for the authorities of the Louvre. At our Museum Dr. Murray and Mr. C. H. Read, and in Germany Dr. Furtwängler, had never believed in the tiara, but the Louvre has

men as good as they, and Dr. Furtwängler believes in a terra-cotta head of Zeus, which looked to me as if it were of the nineteenth century A.D. My opinion is worth nothing, but other observers, trained archæologists, were of the same mind.

* * *

Thus there is a great deal of doubtful ground in archæology. 'An antiquary must have bought his forgeries before he can be regarded as thoroughly seasoned,' writes Sir John Evans. Moreover, after any amount of experience, the archæologist may still be taken in; many practised hands were deceived, if M. de Mortillet was in the right about objects found in Italy, Russia, and Poland: he himself was deceived when he denounced Dr. Schliemann's discoveries and derided Mrs. Schliemann. On the whole, when I thought for a few days that the magic stone might perhaps be very old as a magic stone, I got my seasoning pretty cheaply, for of course I did not buy the object, which was the heirloom of a friend. That was more inexpensive than 8*l.* for a very dubious jawbone, and 8000*l.* for a certainly fraudulent gold cap.

* * *

Without forgetting the comic mishap of the magic stone, one may recommend persons curious as to pictures of Mary Queen of Scots to visit Mr. Shepherd's gallery in King Street, St. James's, and inspect a portrait of Queen Mary which is not for sale. The story of it is that it was disposed of on the death of a Mr. Whiting, who, in the female line, was of the family of Andrew, or Andrews. I am not certain about the spelling of the surname. There was, in 1586-87, a 'Mr. Thomas Andrewes, Esq.,' Sheriff of Northamptonshire, who, as his duty demanded, was present at the slaying of the Queen at Fotheringay, and stood on her left hand beside the scaffold. That he did so is certain (see Tanner MSS. 78, f. 129, in the Bodleian Library, published by the Hon. Mrs. Maxwell-Scott, in *The Tragedy of Fotheringay*, pp. 249-256). Mr. Whiting was, as is averred, the descendant in the female line of 'Mr. Thomas Andrewes, Esq.,' and inherited this portrait, which, according to the belief of his family, was given to Mr. Andrewes by the Queen. She actually did give a portrait to the Constable of the Castle, but one sees no reason why she should bestow one on the sheriff of the county. She did, however, possess a portrait of herself to the last, as will be found in an inventory of her goods in the seventh volume of Prince Labanoff's collection of her letters, and the sheriff may

have bought it from one of her suite. It is on panel, in an old frame, and represents the head and bust. The ruff is of a kind which is not known to me earlier than 1578. Being seasoned, and rendered cautious by my deplorable adventure of the magic stone, I shall venture no further than to say that, of all unhappy faces, this is the most marked by sorrow and passion, while retaining elements of great beauty and charm, and that the portrait belongs to none of the known 'false types' of likeness of the Queen. It is not figured by Mr. Way, Mr. Cust, Sir George Scharf, or Mr. Foster, and is of great interest.

ANDREW LANG.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him, informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

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